

Dudley

CHRONICLE



Thursday, March 24, 2016

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FOOTBALL PITCH FEES GOING UP

Report by Andrew Turton

FOOTBALL pitch fees will rise for the second year in a row across Dudley borough – despite claims that almost half of the pitches are in a ‘poor’ state.

Teams currently pay around £518 a season to use council pitches and changing rooms but this is set to rise by two per cent under proposals.

An investigation last year found that only 97 out of 167 pitches were found to be average or good condition with 70 found to be ‘poor’.

Overhanging trees, worn out surfaces and outdated changing rooms are among the problems highlighted. Teams say the fee rise was expected but want more to be done to improve the condition of pitches. Last year council officials proposed putting up fees by 40 per cent but backed down following talks with teams over maintenance costs.

Dudley Council is backing £2 million plans for new all-weather pitches in the borough including at Hillcrest School in Netherton and The Dell Stadium, Pensnett.

Brian Sutton, a representative of the Dudley and Cradley Heath Football League, welcomed those plans but said traditional pitches also needed to be cared for.

Alternatives

“It is just the way it is at the moment that these things have to go up,” said Mr Sutton, who also sits on an advisory group to the council called Dudley Football Forum. “At least it isn’t the 40 per cent they said last year.”

“Not much is done with the pitches. They cut them but they don’t rake them or put fertiliser on them regularly.”

Councillor Patrick Harley, who helps manage The Swan pub team which plays on Wordsley Park, said the council should be looking at alternatives for funding.

The opposition Conservative group leader added: “When we had control of the council we would be looking to bring in people that could cut the grass a lot cheaper than the council.”

Under plans, the cost will increase to £527.90 to hire the football pitch and changing rooms per season. The pitch and changing rooms hire on a casual basis will be £50.49 per match, up from £49.50. Junior football teams pay £182.90 for an up-nine-a-side pitch but will pay £186.56 under the planned increases.

A report to Councillor Hilary Bills, who oversees parks, said: “The council’s budget target requires on average a minimum increase in fees and charges of two per cent for 2016/17, however there are a number of services where, due to budget constraints, cost levels and market conditions, a higher rate than this is necessary.”



Councillor Patrick Harley

Clearing up of rubbish starts again

WORK has re-started clearing a huge rubbish pile next to homes in Brierley Hill – after the project was hit by delays due to a change in contractors.

Rubbish at one time towered at around 40ft at the Refuse Derived Fuel plant, in Moor Street, which led to a campaign from councillors and residents for a clean-up of the mountain of waste, which involved the Environment Agency.

Rubbish has been piled up at the site for more than six years leading to a court battle to have it removed. It was a saga that resulted in High Court action with company director Robert McNaughton jailed for failing to remove it in 2013.

Contractors originally moved on to the site at the end of January but work paused, to the frustration of residents. But it resumed last week after a change of contractors.

It has been revealed that proposals to build flats on the RDF site are likely to be resurrected once the rubbish is cleared. A scheme to build two modern blocks containing 94 flats was unveiled last year but stalled as a developer feared they might be landed with the clean-up bill.

More shops closing than are opening

STOURBRIDGE saw the biggest percentage rate of closures of multiple chain shops in the Black Country in 2015.

But across the region, as a whole, the rate of shops shutting slowed according to research for PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Birmingham, which saw the new Grand Central development open, bucked the trend of closures with an increase of 29 shops over the year.

But in Stourbridge there was a 5.32 per cent fall from 94 to 89 shops with 10 shops closing and five opening.

In Dudley there was a 2.86 per cent decline with six openings and nine closures and in Halesowen a 1.39 per cent decline with one opening and two closures.

Andy Lyon, partner and head of retail at PwC West Midlands, said: “The openings are concentrated on experience type outlets, especially food and beverage. The closures reflect ongoing structured changes in retail banking and the higher regulatory hurdles facing so called ‘money shops’. Fashion has taken another battering.”

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Brave Dennis, 82, is king of the castle



‘I’ll give it a go’ – stroke survivor Dennis Tipper, aged 82, abseils down Dudley Castle walls in aid of the Stroke Association

Wonder wall effort

AN 82-year-old stroke survivor scaled the heights of Dudley Castle to raise money for charity – then said ‘I would get up there and do it again in a shot’.

Dennis Tipper, from Lye, came down 100ft off the castle walls to raise more than £300 for the Stroke Association.

Fundraisers gathered to see Mr Tipper take on the abseil along with his son-in-law Frank Cragge and friend Michelle O’Meara.

More than 30 people had abseiled the medieval walls of the popular attraction during the course of the event on Saturday.

Mr Tipper, who attends the Dudley Stroke Association group, said: “This is something that is incredi-

bly close to my heart after I suffered a stroke myself. To be able to be here today and to do this feels great.

“There is a group of us and we all meet and support each other and when I heard about the abseil I thought why not give it a go.”

Son-in-law Frank Cragge, aged 51, confessed before the taking the spiral staircase to the castle towers that he was petrified of heights.

He said: “Going over the edge at the top was the worst bit but once you’ve done it that feels amazing.”

Michelle O’Meara from Dudley, who works with the support group, said she was touched by Dennis’ story and felt the need to join in to help the work of the Stroke Association.

HOUSING

More than 120 new homes are planned

MORE than 120 homes will be built on the former Ridge Hill Hospital site in Wordsley after the plan won the backing of Dudley councillors.

A mix of houses and apartments will be built at the site on Brierley Hill Road, with 129 homes to be created in total.

Most of the empty buildings in the hospital grounds will be demolished.

The site has long been a target for developers keen to transform the site. Plans for homes at the site were first lodged in 2007. Neighbours have long called for the site to be cleaned up and brought back to use.

PROPERTY

Town pub goes up for sale at £225k

A PUB in Dudley town centre has been put up for sale with a price tag of £225,000.

The Malt Shovel in Tower Street, which is currently closed, is being advertised by property firm Rightmove.

The Malt Shovel has been a fixture of the town centre for decades and its potential sale has raised hopes that it could be taken over by new owners and re-opened. However, the pub building may also attract interest from property developers.

FIRE

Worker injured in blaze at a garage

A MAN was taken to hospital with burns to his face and hands after a severe blaze at an MOT test centre in the Black Country.

Up to four cars were damaged by the intensity of the flames at the garage in Old Hill on Friday afternoon.

Around 20 firefighters were called to Bridge Street Service Station, in Garratts Lane at around 1.30pm.

Garratts Lane had to be closed between Powke Lane and Wrights Lane due to the severity of the fire.

Firefighters from Haden Cross, Oldbury and Brierley Hill were on scene for more than two hours.

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Gary Rolinson - sex offences

A DRIVING instructor who was found guilty of sexually assaulting six of his teenage pupils is planning to appeal against his conviction – after criticising his barrister's conduct in his trial, a court heard.

Gary Rolinson has lodged an appeal with the Court of Appeal and his barrister Miss Samantha Forsyth, who defended him during his trial at Wolverhampton Crown Court, said she was no longer able to represent him.

The case had been adjourned for a pre-sentence report on Rolinson following his conviction for 13 offences of sexual assault and one of causing a person to engage in sexual activity.

Rolinson, who ran the 500+ Driving School in Kingswinford, preyed on young men by sexually assaulting them during lessons between 2012 and 2014, the jury heard.

He was first arrested in 2012 after a teenager made a complaint about Rolinson touching him inappropriately. In 2014 there was a further complaint by another young man, so the police wrote to more than 700 people who had been taught by Rolinson. As a result other youths, aged 17 and 18 at the time of their lessons came forward.

Rolinson, aged 60, now of Mulberry Green, Dudley, had been due to be sentenced at Warwick Crown Court but Miss Forsyth said she did not feel able to mitigate for him.

She explained: "Mr Rolinson has shown me a bundle of documents he has submitted to the Court of Appeal Criminal Division. He has made quite serious allegations of professional impropriety in my conduct of the case and that of my instructing solicitor. I am in an invidious position."

The case was adjourned until April 22.

'Demon' knifeman was low risk when released

A PARANOID schizophrenic who believed he was possessed by a demon when launching a ferocious attack that almost killed a pensioner had been deemed to be of low risk to the public when released weeks earlier.

Tommy Smith – now aged 18 – was released from Werrington Young Offenders Institution in Stoke on home detention and curfew in January last year after being locked up for two knifepoint robberies.

Low risk prisoners can be considered for home detention curfew if they are serving a sentence of more than three months but less than four years and have completed a quarter of their sentence.

The youth offending team that supervised him after his release was not warned he had a potential mental health problem.

The following month Smith – living in Grove Street, Dudley – stabbed Mr Peter Churm at least 10 times and is now in Ashworth high security psychiatric hospital in Liverpool.

Onslaught

After the victim refused to hand over the keys to his son's Range Rover on February 24 last year, the onslaught was so ferocious that the kitchen knife Smith wielded broke in two. Smith later told forensic psychiatrist Dr Jon Kennedy that he had started suffering from hallucinations three weeks before the attack on 66-year-old Mr Churm in Owen Street.

At the time of the stabbing Smith claimed to have been possessed by a 'demon'. Dr Kennedy – who interviewed Smith last July – said the defendant explained 'he felt pulled, as if by a magnet, and ran towards the victim with the knife held out in front of him.' Smith has since been diagnosed as paranoid schizophrenic. A jury at Wolverhampton Crown Court found him not guilty of attempted murder because of his state of mind but convicted him of causing grievous bodily harm and burglary.

He denied all offences although the defence conceded he was the attacker. He will be sentenced at a later date.

An investigation is understood to have found there were no major errors in the decision to treat him as low risk.

Record plant love is a long player



Netherton couple Ivor and Vera Lander have celebrated 60 years of marriage after meeting at BSR

A MATCH made over the turntables at record player manufacturer Birmingham Sound Reproducers (BSR) has seen a couple celebrate their diamond wedding anniversary.

Ivor Roy and Vera Lander, aged 81 and 80, from Netherton first met at BSR in the 1950s.

The 20-year-old Ivor first met his future wife when handing in forms to the 18-year-old who was working in a different department of the company.

At its height, BSR made 87 per cent of all the record turntables sold in the world, exporting components to all the leading manufacturers of record players, including the famous Dansette, the must-have item for every teenager's bedroom in the swinging '60s.

The couple's first date was a trip to the Regent Cinema, opposite Top Church in Dudley. They were married on March 3, 1956, at St Andrew's Church, Netherton, going to Blackpool for their honeymoon.

Later Ivor worked for Rover and Vera at Hickman on Saltwells Road.

The couple have five children, Susan, Carol, Jacqueline, Adrian and Richard, 11 grandchildren and one great-granddaughter, Emmie Ann, aged five months.

Vera said: "We've always been a very happy couple and Roy still puts a smile on my face. He still loves me, bless him. We've had a great life and always been surrounded by a loving family."

Mother has to pay £580 after dog bit warden

A MOTHER-OF-TWO was given a suspended jail sentence after a rottweiler at her home in Dudley bit a dog warden.

Stacey Cheadle, aged 36, called a dog warden to remove the rottweiler, called Rocky, from her property in Green Park Road, Kates Hill.

But as Zoe Lockley arrived she insisted Cheadle did not open the door as the dog was described as 'out of control', magistrates were told. When Cheadle opened the door, the dog attacked the warden, biting her twice on the right arm.

Dudley Magistrates Court heard the warden attended Russells Hall Hospital for treatment.

Cheadle was found guilty after a trial of being in charge of a dog which was dangerously out of control, causing injury. She was sentenced to six weeks imprisonment suspended for 12 months and ordered to pay £300 compensation, £200 in court costs and £80 victim surcharge.

Magistrates also instructed that she would no longer be able to own a dog and ordered that the rottweiler be destroyed.

Magistrates heard the incident happened on February 7 last year, after a call was made by Cheadle to collect the dog.

Miss Kelly Crowe, prosecuting, said when asked at the time about ownership of the dog, Cheadle 'remained silent'.

Mr Andrew Brocklehurst, defending, said Cheadle was of good character. He added: "My client has always claimed it wasn't her dog and had no control over it. She has remorse for what happened."

Rotary project to protect children

THE Rotary Club of Dudley has been asked to present a project they have funded warning of the dangers of child exploitation.

Members will go to the organisation's national conference in Bournemouth next month to talk about their work with production company Chatback on the film.

The project was awarded £1,000 from a centenary fund which Dudley Rotary initiated to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Rotary movement in 2005.

Chatback decided to make a 30-minute film called Anybody's Child, helping children, parents, carers and teachers to understand the dangers of children being targeted and groomed by people who want to exploit them.

Free organ recital at parish church

MUSIC fans are invited to an organ recital at a church in the Black Country on April 3.

Paul Carr will be performing at Holy Trinity Parish Church in Wordsley High Street. Admission to the recital, at 3pm, is free.

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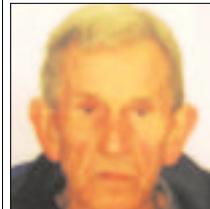
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Outcry at fatal road tragedy sentence



Ivan Tranter, aged 83

A JUDGE has been criticised for giving a 'lenient' sentence to a postman who killed a father-of-eight by driving into him, having apparently fallen asleep at the wheel.

Sajid Hussain, aged 36, was given a suspended jail sentence and a community order after pleading guilty to causing the death of David Hinton, from Halesowen, by careless driving. But a campaign has now been launched by friends of Mr Hinton who want the sentence reviewed.

Hussain was at the wheel of a Volkswagen Polo when it struck Mr Hinton, 47, who had been putting his young children into his green Peugeot 206 in Oakham Road, Dudley.

Wolverhampton Crown Court heard that Hussain 'must have dozed off' before the collision near to the junction with Tansley Hill Road on June 20 last year.

Judge James Burbidge gave him an eight-month jail term suspended for two years, 200 hours of unpaid work and a three year driving ban. Sentencing him, the judge said: 'The damage you have done to the Hinton family is immeasurable.'

Mark Scott, who has set up a petition, claims Hussain, of Blackacre Road, Dudley, should have been given a harsher sentence. The petition has already been signed by 1,100 but needs 100,000 to go to Parliament.

He said: 'I would like to have the lenient sentence overturned and a proper sentence given to Sajid Hussain who killed a family man leaving a widow and eight young children.'

It's a jam packed holiday fortnight

YOUNGSTERS can enjoy a jam-packed range of activities and family fun days with the Juniors at Museums club this Easter Sunday.

Free family trails, where children can hunt for clues around the venues, will be available every day from March 25 to April 10 at the Red House Glass Cone, and from March 25 until April 9 at Dudley Museum and Art Gallery.

There is a free, drop-in, Sticky Saturday session on April 9 at Dudley Museum and at the Red House Glass Cone on April 16 with the chance to have a go at messy crafts. Sticky Saturday runs 1.30pm to 3.30pm at both venues.

For information about the range of activities visit www.dudley.gov.uk/se-and-do/museums

Rubbish cleared from woodland

RUBBISH has been cleared months after being dumped in woods at Dudley. Waste near Castle Mill Road was removed by Dudley Council, after Dudley North MP Ian Austin contacted them on behalf of nearby residents.

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OAP died after hospital car park accident

A PENSIONER died after being knocked down by car on a hospital car park, an inquest heard.

Ivan Tranter, aged 83, from Wellington Close, Kingswinford, suffered head injuries during the incident at Russells Hall Hospital on November 3 last year.

An inquest at Smethwick Coroners Court heard how Mr Tranter, who had attended a hospital appointment, was hit by a reversing vehicle.

A collision investigator said the driver would have not been able to see him due to a 'large blind spot area'.

Mr Tranter received treatment and was

released from hospital to Hillcroft Nursing Home in Stourbridge. But his condition deteriorated and he was admitted to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, where he died on November 27.

Pamela Broadbent, the driver of the car that struck Mr Tranter, described how she had been 'gently reversing' into a space when she heard a noise and jumped out of the Hyundai i10.

Mrs Broadbent, a retired IT consultant from Dudley, said: 'I was taking my husband for his hospital appointment and we had arrived half an hour early. We saw a van pull out a space. I checked over

my right shoulder and then my left and continued to look around while gently reversing when I heard this scraping noise as if something had rolled under the car. Mr Tranter was lying face down a few feet away. It was a complete shock.'

PC Mark Crozier, collision investigator, said it would have been impossible for Mrs Broadbent to see Mr Tranter. He added: 'I would conclude it would have been impossible to see him because he would have been in quite a large blind spot area.'

Coroner Mr Zafar Siddique concluded a verdict of death by road traffic collision.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Tickets for charity show now on sale

TICKETS for a charity show hosted by the Mayor of Dudley are on sale.

Acts already lined up for the event in May include are Louise Roberts, Phil Arron, Emily Jones, Richie Ray, Jonathan Jones and Bubble.

Money raised on the night will be shared between Mayor Councillor Steve Walther's five charities.

The event will be held at Parkes Hall Social Club in Parkes Hall Road, Dudley, on Friday, May 13. The show starts at 7pm and tickets cost £4, available from the club or 07412 531924.

Patrols stepped up over bike menace

YOBS have been causing a nuisance by riding off-road bikes around the Fens Pool Nature Reserve, leading to complaints.

Police said officers had seized one bike and two other youths had been warned about riding around at the beauty spot in Pensnett.

They said the area near Blackwater Close was a particular hotspot, while the bikes have also been seen on roads around Fens Pool.

Officers have stepped up patrols following complaints from people who live nearby.

First properties to go on market

THE first homes on a new housing development in Rowley Regis will soon be released for sale.

Redrow has permission to build on the former St Michael's Business and Enterprise College site on Thorne Road. Rowley Grange will include 111 three and four-bedroom homes.

Redrow spokeswoman Pauline Turnbull said: 'We'll soon be releasing the first properties for sale off-plan with fully furnished show homes to open in a couple of months' time.'

Happy singing sessions offered to youngsters

CHILDREN can find their voice by taking part in singing sessions this Easter.

Primary school music co-ordinator Margaret Jones is running the class on March 30 at Habsbury Christian Fellowship, in Albert Road, Halesowen.

Youngsters can learn songs from the movies, including Happy and Somewhere Over The Rainbow. The day starts at 10am and ends with a performance at 3pm. Email shenstonemusic@gmail.com, or call 07761849332.

Get out on the floor

AN evening of Northern Soul music is being offered at Dudley Town Hall on April 16.

Tickets for the event are £7 from the box office on (01384) 812812.

The music runs from 8pm to 1am with DJs including Hitsville Chalky, Martin Stanford and Ginger Taylor.

4,000 jobs on the way at revived Waterfront

MORE than 4,000 jobs will be created at The Waterfront after the Chancellor George Osborne gave backing to revitalise the site.

Civic leaders say said the plans also hold the key to bringing the much-heralded Midland Metro extension to Brierley Hill.

Proposals to make The Waterfront and parts of neighbouring Harts Hill an enterprise zone were approved as part of the Chancellor's budget last Wednesday.

Businesses moving in will be given a business rate free period for five years to tempt them to move to the complex near the Merry Hill shopping centre.

Long term aims also include creating 66,000 sq ft of business space to improve what is already on offer to potential tenants.

Earlier plans for a new enterprise zone at The Waterfront stalled after they were shelved in favour of sites around Darlaston and Wolverhampton's i54 in 2011.

The Waterfront has been hit by problems in recent years after a series of high-profile business pulled out of the site. Currently around 40 per cent of the site is vacant.

During its heyday, The Waterfront was one of the borough's prime locations with waterside bars and restaurants adding to the vibrant atmosphere.

Success

Dudley Council leader, Councillor Pete Lowe, said the creation of the new zone marked a major success for Dudley and the region.

'Its development, alongside the delivery of the Metro, will create jobs for people not only living locally but for those living across the whole of the West Midlands,' he said.

This announcement shows huge confidence in what we are trying to achieve in Dudley borough, which can now take a leading role in creating jobs for the future.'

Dudley councillor Khurshid Ahmed, the council's economic development chief, added: 'The Waterfront is a high quality employment area, which like many areas across the country has suffered due to wider economic circumstances in recent years.'

'It will be an exceptional location and the delivery of new transport links and environmental improvements will help stimulate further investment. The enterprise zone at the Waterfront will also be complemented by plans for significant housing growth.'



Coseley's Niki Jones with dachshund puppy Bindi, who has deformed feet and needs a pioneering operation so she can walk like other dogs

Bionic dog bid to help fix Bindi

IT'S a dog's life for Bindi the dachshund. The pampered pooch looks down at her canine comrades from the vantage point of her own prism on trips to the park.

But the unlucky puppy has had it tough. Born with a condition that leaves her barely able to walk, the six-month-old could soon become the Black Country's own bionic dog thanks to a pioneering operation.

Devoted owner Niki Jones is determined to give her the best life possible by raising £7,500 to give her a bionic paw. 'I just want to give her the best quality of life,' says Niki, 41, from Coseley.

Niki helps run a group for devoted dog fans who share her passion for dachshunds.

When she saw her pet Pepper had given birth to a tiny puppy, she soon realised something was wrong. Bindi, a miniature smooth haired dachshund, had defects to both her front paws.

Niki, who runs a computer sales and repairs business with her husband, has found a pioneering vet who can amputate the worst paw and replace it with a bionic one. See www.gofundme.com/bionicbindi

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AUNTIE Beeb says the Top Gear stunt, with a wheel-spinning Mustang clouding the Cenotaph in tyre smoke, will not be broadcast. Well, of course not. It has served its purpose. It has proved the old adage that there's no such thing as bad publicity.

ASK a silly question, get a silly answer. The form for a US visa asks: "Do you seek to engage in or have you ever engaged in terrorist activities, espionage, sabotage or genocide?" John McGarry, a blameless retired cop from Lancashire, says his travel agent mistakenly ticked the box. As a result Mr McGarry was marched off the cruise ship when it docked in New York and was questioned by police, an experience which he says ruined the trip.

MORE things misheard in youth. A former cookery teacher recalls the pupil who thought she was using self-erasing flour.

HERE comes the sun, and with it a lesson in physics. If I light our stove, the lounge takes about two hours to warm up. If the sun shines through the windows, the room warms up in 20 minutes. Even though it's 93 million miles away, the sun is remarkably good at making things hot. This rarely gets a mention in the issue of climate change, yet Google has more than a million references to climate change and solar activity, varied enough to endorse any theory you choose to support, and demolish the ones you don't like. Something to read while toasting in your hammock this blazing March.



THE Archbishop of Canterbury says it is not racist to worry about mass immigration, and he makes the headlines. Yet while it is moderately interesting to hear an archbishop admit migration can bring problems, it is far more interesting to hear a migrant saying the same. Keith Vaz, the Labour MP who came to the UK with his family in 1965, says the system for resettling asylum seekers is unfair. The usual line from the Left is that immigration, diversity and multiculturalism are wholly beneficial, and the more the merrier. The Left love to use words such as "cultural enrichment" and "vibrant" and try to pretend it's a joyous thing to have lots of non-English-speaking surgeons, and schools where 50 languages are spoken. But Vaz says: "The dispersal system appears unfair, with whole swathes of the country never receiving a single asylum seeker." In other words, the inner-cities have had enough, time to share the vibrancy around.

BETTER late than never. The Private Eye reports the curious fact that a director of Volkswagen, the car maker accused of falsifying diesel emissions, is called Olaf Lies – as reported in this column last October.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Garden city seeks international backing

PLANS to turn the Black Country into Britain's biggest 'garden city' show the region has a bright future, business leaders claim.

The huge project would see the Garden City built across 30 towns in and around Wolverhampton.

Around 45,000 homes would be built with open spaces and greenery, meeting the area's housing demand.

Tim Johnson, Wolverhampton's

strategic director, was showcasing the plan at MIPIM – Le marché international des professionnels de l'immobilier – conference at Cannes in the south of France.

Investment

Mr Johnson will be presenting Wolverhampton as a city of change, with the promise of £3.7 billion worth of investment in the pipeline.

The city council's economic chief, Councillor John Reynolds said: "MIPIM provides a global platform to sell what Wolverhampton has to offer."

The Black Country has joined forces with the wider West Midlands for the region's biggest ever bid for investment at MIPIM this year.

Tom Westley, leader member for the enterprise zone on the Black

Country Local Enterprise Partnership added: "Greater Birmingham's MIPIM 2016 delegation will be its biggest yet, demonstrating how the region's investment potential has gained real momentum and remains highly competitive."

"For the Black Country MIPIM is a fundamental opportunity to make new industry connections and stimulate investor interest."

Network Rail work disruption over Easter

RAIL users are being warned of major disruption as the line between Wolverhampton and Birmingham New Street closes for six days over Easter.

From tomorrow (Good Friday) until Wednesday, the line connecting the two cities will be closed due to work being undertaken by Network Rail on a key junction near Smethwick.

Four days of works are also taking place in Stafford to remove the last remaining bottleneck that causes delays on the West Coast Main Line.

During this time, London Midland trains will be significantly reduced and replacement bus services will be in use.

Martin Frobisher, route managing director for Network Rail, said: "The upgrade between Birmingham and Wolverhampton is essential to maintain a reliable infrastructure and involves a significant amount of work. It has been carefully planned to be completed as safely and quickly as possible."

"I appreciate there will be some disruption as a result of this work and I'd like to thank passengers for their patience while we carry out this investment to provide a better railway."

The work is part of Network Rail's £40 billion Railway Upgrade Plan.

On Good Friday, and the three days after, there will be half-hourly replacement bus service for local stations between Birmingham New Street and Wolverhampton.

Reduced direct train services will be provided by other operators such as Virgin Trains and CrossCountry.

New bus fleet for Ring and Ride

A WEST Midlands charity providing a discount bus service to people with limited mobility has launched a new fleet of vehicles.

Ring and Ride has launched seven new vehicles to benefit passengers living in the Black Country. They were unveiled at a ceremony held at the Black Country Living Museum last week. Each bus has been named after some of the charity's longest standing passengers, some have been using the door-to-door service for more than 30 years.

David Birmingham, chief executive for West Midlands Special Needs Transport, said: "This investment cements our commitment in continuing to provide our vital service to the people of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton."

Charity quiz night is held in aid of Oxfam

PEOPLE can test their general knowledge at a quiz in aid of Stourbridge Oxfam on Wednesday, April 2, at Holy Trinity Church Hall in Amblecote at 7.30pm.

Tickets cost £7 which includes fish and chips or a vegan option.

Cloudy2Clear Windows – Service With A Smile!

It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

Managing Director Brian Stanley feels that it's all about service. 'Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass in a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 5 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people

money, although that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done.'

We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole.'

Cloudy2Clear service Wolverhampton and the surrounding

area and Brian is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. 'The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people

I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated.'

So, if your windows are steamed up, broken or damaged give Brian a call for a free quotation on 0800 61 21 118 and he'll be happy to help!



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Fundraising mayor will run London Marathon

THE Mayor of Dudley will be pounding the streets of the capital when he takes part in next month's London Marathon for his five major charities.

Councillor Steve Waltho will be taking place in the world-famous 27 mile event on April 24.

People are also being encouraged to dig deep to sponsor the mayor and help his chosen charities: The Hope Centre, The What? Centre, More Mascots Please, Leukaemia Unit Appeal Fund at Russells Hall and The West Midlands Lupus Group.

Councillor Waltho, a veteran of 13 marathons, has secured the place in the marathon through the West Midlands Lupus Group, but the money raised will be divided between to all five charities.

Local businesses have already stepped forward to support the Mayor by donating £5,000 towards the fund.

Councillor Waltho said: "The older you get the tougher these marathons get. I really do hope people will support me by donating whatever they can."

"These charities do such amazing work and I want to do everything I can to raise as much money to help them continue helping people."

"A huge thank you to the sponsors who have already come forward to support me."

The businesses backing the mayor include Bathams, intu, Cousins, Black Country Training Group and Solvay.

Help online at mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/mayorstevealtho

Extra support for cancer patients

CANCER patients are being offered support via a new course run by a Dudley-based Black Country charity.

White House Cancer Support, based at Ednam Road in Dudley, is running the Expert Patient Programme course starting on April 12.

It aims to help people take more control of their health by learning new skills to manage their condition better.

The course, which runs until May 17, consists of six sessions lasting two-and-a-half hours each.

Tutors are trained volunteers who have personal experience of living with long-term conditions, either as a patient or carer.

To register or find out more call (01384) 231232.

Cricket club quiz night is fundraiser

LYE Cricket Club is holding a fundraising quiz night. The event at its pavilion in Stourbridge Road on April 8 at 7.30pm and is for teams of up to six. It costs £2 per team member to enter.

Drug dealer sent to prison for five years

A FORMER addict caught dealing Class A drugs for a third time has been sent to prison for five years and eight months.

Robert Pearce changed direction in his Ford Focus after spotting a police car in Sedgley. The move aroused the suspicion of the officers but the 49-year-old ignored their request to stop and accelerated away.

Wolverhampton Crown Court heard that police saw him throw a package out of a window of the vehicle. When recovered it was found to contain £600 worth of cocaine parcelled up into 15 £40 street deals.

Mr Alex Warren, prosecuting, said Pearce had two

mobile phones, one of which rang 'constantly' while he was being quizzed by police at the scene. On it were discovered text messages linking him to drug dealers with ten customers over two days.

The defendant had eight previous convictions involving 23 separate offences. These included the supply of heroin for which he received a prison sentence in 1997 and possession of heroin with intent to supply in 2000 while on licence following early release from the previous jail term.

Mr Christopher O'Gorman, defending, said Pearce had not committed any offence between 2008 and his latest arrest for drug dealing, which took place after the police pursuit on December 5, 2014.

The defendant from Limehouse, Hailes Park Close, Parkfields, admitted possession of cocaine with intent to supply.

Judge James Burridge QC who told him: "You were out plying the trade of a drug dealer when you saw a police patrol, immediately took flight and threw a quantity of drugs out of the window. One of your phones that rang constantly while police were dealing with you and this was later found to contain further evidence of your drug dealing."

"You know how seriously courts view this kind of offending. You have two previous convictions for similar offences but the two significant periods of custody that these brought have not discouraged you."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Children's ward is helped by casino

A BUSINESSMAN and former World's Strongest Man competitor teamed up with an entertainment company to raise £1,500 for Russells Hall Hospital children's ward.

Fraser Tranter joined forces with Casino 36, including group manager Craig Dobson, to raise the money.

Children's ward manager Lucy Davis said: "The unit will immediately put the money to good use."

"It was a pleasure to meet Fraser and Craig Dobson, from the casino, and to be able to thank them both in person."

Mayors check out latest sight help

CIVIC dignitaries were among those who got to find out more about the Beacon Centre during a special event to showcase its services.

The sight-loss charity based in Sedgley opened its doors to welcome council officials including Mayor of Dudley Councillor Steve Waltho and Wolverhampton Mayor Councillor Ian Brookfield. They were given a tour of the facilities including the Independent Living Centre and met some of the service users, who were taking part in a range of activities including exercise sessions, craft and cooking lessons.

Oompah and chips on menu

AN annual fundraising night giving people a taste of German music takes place next month.

Mary Stevens Hospice is hosting its Bavarian night on April 22 at Wilson Hall, in Colley Gate, Cradley.

Tickets are £15 per person to include a fish and chip supper. Doors open at 7.15pm and the band starts at 8pm.

To buy tickets call Diane on (01384) 377 778.

Forest fun as children can play in the woods

YOUNGSTERS can join free outdoor play sessions outdoors at a Black Country beauty spot.

Forest Friends will run on March 31 and then at dates in April at Warley Woods.

There will be plenty of activities to enjoy, including arts and crafts, den building, tree climbing and stories. Sessions will run from 10am until noon and 1pm until 3pm for under-eights and 10am until 3pm for over-eights. Book on 0845 352 7853.

Road rage incident

TWO men were arrested following an alleged road rage incident between Halesowen and Stourbridge. A driver was punched and a window smashed as violence flared on the A456 Birmingham Road, near Hagley, at 8.45am Friday. Men from Kidderminster and Birmingham were arrested.

Rapid rise in number of pupils being expelled

THE number of children expelled from Dudley secondary schools has risen by 75 per cent over a three year period.

Nearly half of the 89 students kicked out in 2014/15 were excluded because of persistent disruptive behaviour. Council chiefs labelled the numbers as 'a very rapid rise'.

In the 2012/2013 school year 51 pupils were permanently excluded across Key Stage 4 with that figure leaping to 89 for 2014/2015, an increase of 75 per cent. In 2013/2014 75 children were expelled. The highest increase came from Year 10 pupils with 11 expelled in 2012/2013 rising to 28 in 2014/2015. A total of 24 were excluded in 2013/2014.

Councillor David Vickers, of the council's People Services Scrutiny Committee, urged for more to be done. He said: "We need to do some hard work. I am disappointed with the figures that this report shows."

Reduce

Councillor Ian Cooper, cabinet member for children's services, said: "The education authority is working with all schools to try to reduce the need for permanent exclusions and this proactive approach has already seen a much lower rate of permanent exclusions in the current academic year, to a level which is already less than a half of what it was at the same point last year.

The level of permanent exclusions from primary schools is below the regional average for the West Midlands."

Data also revealed that six schools have ex-

cluded 15 or more pupils with three schools ex-

cluding 21 or more. But bosses stated there was an 'enormous variation' between schools.

The School Standards Report 2015 stated:

"The raw numbers of exclusions, at 74 for the year 2013-14, is higher than all other local authorities except Birmingham and Staffordshire. Both are much larger authorities.

"As a proportion of the school population, the rate of permanent exclusion is more than twice as high as most of our closest geographical neighbours. These figures hide an enormous variation between schools. One school has only

permanently excluded one student, and another only two, during the last three years six schools have permanently excluded 15 or more

during that period, with three schools excluding 21 or more."

Protest over expansion into park



The Friends of Netherton Park protest at the planned site for the expansion of Netherton Park Nursery

CAMPAIGNERS have hit out at plans by a nursery to expand its site onto parkland, saying the site is important for nature conservation.

Netherton Park Nursery School and Kindergarten is proposing to build an extension to its site to accommodate more children after identifying a need in the area.

But the plans have sparked con-

cerns after it emerged the building, off Arch Hill Street, would be constructed on part of Netherton Park.

Members of the Friends of Netherton Park have been distributing leaflets to homes and speaking to residents over the issue.

Group member Vicki Duckworth said: "We have no objections to the new nursery places

but there are other areas in Netherton where they could build a new nursery. We do not think they should build this on the park. There are also problems with parking down Arch Hill Street."

But letters have also been sent to Dudley Council's planning department by other residents supporting the nursery's plans.

A decision is yet to be made.

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It's wheely not on to keep up criticism

BLACK Country MP Ian Austin has challenged critics of the giant ferris wheel in Dudley town centre, including Good Morning Britain presenter Piers Morgan, to put their prejudices to one side, and give the DY Eye a try.

A noble sentiment, but I think it might be an idea if Piers decides to sit this one out. Yes the wheel is 135ft tall, and made from some pretty sturdy looking beams, but would you trust it to carry Morgan's weight?

It's big. But not big enough for Morgan's ego!

□ □ □

WHILE I would never take it upon myself to defend Morgan, you can hardly blame the national media for jumping on the Dudley-bashing bandwagon when there are so many people in the town who seem so keen to put the boot in themselves.

It was after all, not the national media, but 21-year-old Dudley student Vincent Parry who branded it the worst tourist attraction in Britain. And it was not the national media which branded Dudley a "s***hole", but another delightfully articulated son of the town.

What is it with these people?

It was the same when the Art Deco shoe shop at the top of the town was renovated with a small European grant. People were queuing up to say it was not worth bothering to spend any money on Dudley.

Then there is the delightful Caitlin Moran. Now a fully paid-up member of the London metropolitan elite, she never tires of painting the people of Wolverhampton, where she grew up, as a bunch of reactionary Neanderthal layabouts.

Let's be honest, there is plenty to criticise about both Dudley and Wolverhampton, and regular readers of this column will know that I have few reservations about pointing out these shortcomings on a regular basis. But while I might bemoan the dearth of major retailers in Dudley, or local government's belief that block-paving is the panacea for the decline of the high street, I certainly don't criticise anybody for trying.

Why would anybody object to a ferris wheel? Or a shop being renovated?

Yes there is a lot wrong with our towns. But unlike some people, I would actually like to see them get better.

□ □ □

BESIDES, it is worth taking a trip to see the giant wheel if only to marvel at the workmanship that has gone into it. Just look at those huge girders, the massive bearings, stare in awe at how the powerful engines lift people into the sky.

And then weep at how, little more than a generation ago, we used to make all these incredible structures here in the heart of the Black Country. Where now we have leisure parks and out-of-town shopping centres.

Orkambi, drug that transformed Carly's life and may help others

Carly has been undergoing treatment since she was a child

Carly Jeavons meets Chancellor George Osborne in Whitehall

Trial drugs turned Carly's life around

Carly Jeavons says a trial drug has given her back her life,

PETER MADELEY hears she wants others to benefit as well

STRUGGLING to breathe and suffering from crippling pains and exhaustion, Carly Jeavons was faced with the daunting possibility of losing her home.

Having been diagnosed with cystic fibrosis (CF) at three days old, she had long been used to an exhausting daily routine of medication and exercise.

As a youngster she had a vascuport surgically implanted in her chest, which helps medics intravenously administer medication without constant injections, then at the age of 17 she was diagnosed with CF-related diabetes.

Each day, Carly had to take 90 tablets and herself through a gruelling two-hour stint of physiotherapy just so she could lead anything resembling a 'normal' life.

Deteriorate

But in October 2011 the mother-of-one's health started to deteriorate when she returned to work following the birth of her son, Corey.

"I was completely exhausted all the time and my body couldn't cope," said Carly, from Woodsetton, Dudley. "I started to need more regular, unplanned IVs – which had to take place in hospital as I didn't have the strength to do them myself at home."

"At one point I had to take three months off work due to the numerous IVs, oral antibiotics and steroids I had taken, but nothing made any difference."

Carly says she tried a number of new drugs, all of which had 'terrible side effects'. Then a new IV programme led to an allergic reaction, while she began to suffer with a seemingly permanent chest infection. Her lung function was down to 44 per cent.

"My options were running out," she said.



Carly Jeavons, who has CF, pictured with her son Corey, 5, at home in Woodsetton, Dudley

"The chest infection meant my joints had become so inflamed that I couldn't lift my arms or legs and my mom or fiancée would have to physically get me out of bed and dress me."

"It got to the point where I couldn't make it downstairs at all. I was having stomach blockages, my diabetes was getting more difficult to control and daily activities that were once normal were becoming increasingly difficult."

"I would get up wishing the day away because I couldn't wait to go back to bed at night. I couldn't plan anything because I never knew whether I would feel up to it. And if I did, I had to plan the next few days after so I could recover. Small luxuries such as going for a meal with friends became impossible."

Carly says she reached her lowest ebb. Her mental health began to deteriorate as she realised she was struggling to cope with life.

She started to face up to the very real possibility she was no longer capable of holding down her job.

"That would have meant losing my home," Carly said. "I always managed to maintain a normal life, always worked hard and both my partner and I provided a lovely home and life for our family. But I feared was all about to change."

Just when all seemed lost a glimmer of hope appeared. During a stint as an inpatient at the CF Centre in Dudley, she was told about a new drug called Orkambi that was being put through clinical trials.

The drug – a combination of two treatments – had been developed to thin the thick mucus that builds up on the lungs as a result of CF.

Just five places were available on the trial, but following a test Carly was accepted.

"People might think it was a risk getting

involved in a trial," said Carly, aged 29. "But I never gave it a second thought. I was desperate. By that stage I would have done anything to feel better."

For the first six months of the trial Carly said she didn't know whether she was on the active drug or a placebo. Then in March 2014 she was rolled onto a second phase of treatment where she was given the active drug. Within weeks her life had been transformed.

Her demanding physio routine halved, her lung capacity increased and the chronic pain in her joints subsided, meaning she was able to regularly go to work.

The number of chest infections dramatically decreased, while the strength she regained allowed her to administer her IV antibiotics at home. She no longer required regular visits to hospital and was able to exercise again.

"Right now I am in the best health I have ever been in," Carly said. "I can be a working mom without being exhausted, something I would not have thought possible."

Relief

"The biggest relief is I don't worry like I did before. I still get poorly but I recover much better than I used to. The treatment has taken a massive weight off my shoulders."

Buoyed by her own success with Orkambi, Carly now campaigns on behalf of the Cystic Fibrosis Trust calling for the NHS to extend clinical trials.

Her story prompted a House of Commons debate after her cause was taken up by Dudley North MP Ian Austin. Last week she took the fight to Downing Street where she handed in a 15,000-signature petition and received the backing of Chancellor George Osborne.

Carly said: "Cystic fibrosis care has long been about managing decline, instead of fighting the condition at the source. But thanks to new treatments people living with cystic fibrosis will have the opportunity to experience real changes in how they manage their condition."

The Cystic Fibrosis Trust has published an open letter to Vertex Pharmaceuticals, the manufacturer of Orkambi, urging it to work with the NHS towards a solution.

It is estimated that 50 per cent of the 9,000 CF sufferers in the UK could benefit from Orkambi.

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Continuity the key to tackling scandal of child exploitation

WHAT with the continued cuts in public services it makes you wonder just how Dudley Council leaders can justify paying an Interim Head of Children's Services a salary of £800 a day. If Merlin Joseph is competent enough to do the job why not offer her the post?

Perhaps it would end the uncertainty and ensure some continuity over a department tackling the scandal of child exploitation on our streets.

For far too long the groomers have had

Nickname really not a matter for MP

IAN Austin's criticism of the Washington American football team using the nickname 'Redskins' is a little silly.

Sports teams through the ages have been given names by fans or club owners. Names may have originated decades ago, when there was no negative inference intended.

While 'Washington Native Americans' may be more acceptable now, it doesn't exactly roll off the tongue.

If Mr Austin feels so strongly, why has he not raised the issue of the Exeter 'Chiefs' rugby side before?

Sports teams' nicknames transcend meaning – they just are!

I think Mr Austin is guilty of talking a load of Northampton Town and should concentrate on being a good MP for Dudley.

D STEELE
Wolverhampton

a free run, leaving vulnerable girls isolated with no one to turn to. Shamefully, in the past local authorities, police and other child protection agencies have been reluctant to intervene for fear of racial stereotyping, which could lead to accusations of racism. DMBC tell us they have a campaign in place to combat this type of exploitation, but it could be too late for many of these young girls.

A P CUFF
Stourbridge

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

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51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL

dudley.chrons@
expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Already ample parking space, so cut the fees

DUDLEY Council said that it was severely short of money and would have to make cuts. Then last week they said that they were going to spend several millions on building a multi-storey car park in Tower Street. Between King Street and Duncan Edwards Way there are the acres of the Flood Street car parks, almost the same distance from the town centre as Tower Street, accessible via a foot bridge. To aid usage, couldn't the council reduce the parking fees?

Great view from the wheel of our soon to close museum

WHAT a superb view you can get from Dudley's new (second hand?) ferris wheel, the most interesting feature being the soon-to-be-closed museum.

Can't the councillors of Dudley see the irony in promoting a short term vacuous ride over this well run little gem? Is it too difficult to see the town needs sustainable improvements to the leisure and shopping experience not short term 'entertainments'?

D BAILEY
Tividale

Bandwidth bandit fear

THE report of the lady who had been accused of illegally downloading a film (Dudley Chronicle, March 17) has a serious side to it.

Her details were traced from her IP address, therefore it is likely that someone has used her internet connection to download the film, this should not be possible if it has a security code.

However, we had a charge for use at a time when we were not home to use the computer.

BT were unable to explain why to us but our internet had been used by someone, probably to download films, which we never do.

So beware, there are people out there who are clever enough to steal your internet access.

R WILLIAMS
Brierley Hill

What is fate of our gold?

MANY years ago I voted like many others to join the Common Market. I emphasise the Common Market, not Europe.

Has anyone considered what would happen to Europe should we withdraw?

England and Germany are the two largest contributors to the union. There are far more recipients than contributors. How would the rest of the EU cope with the loss of such funding?

I have one more question – what will happen to the load of gold that was transported from the Bank of England to the Bundesbank, Germany, as reserve for the Common Market. Will that be returned?

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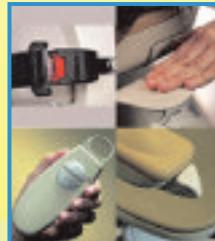


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Long-time sponsors visit India to meet teenager

A COUPLE from Stourbridge have recently returned from India where they visited a 17-year-old boy they have sponsored for more than seven years through a child development charity.

Peter and Jane Baxter, aged 63 and 59, established a friendship with teenager Samya through letters.

He lives with his parents in a community in East India, where houses are typically constructed with dirt floors, mud walls and wooden roofs.

Most adults in Samya's community are unemployed but some work as day labourers and earn the equivalent of £7 a month.

The couple also sponsor 14-year-old Ingabire from Rwanda, who they have also supported over seven years.

Jane said: "It was a long-awaited experience to meet Samya. We are

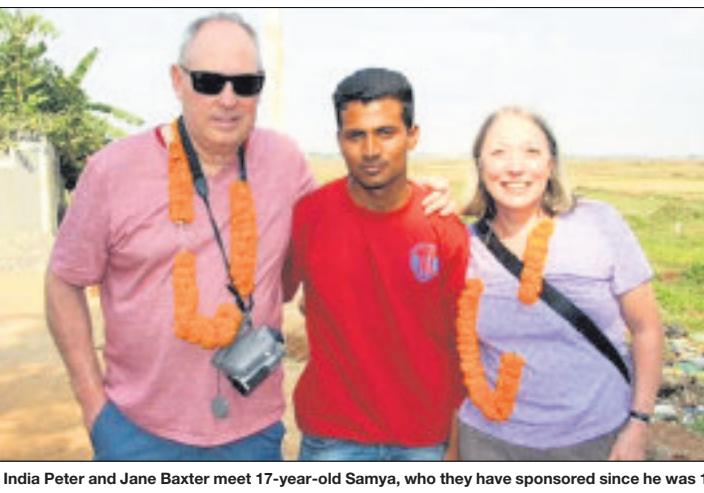
always thrilled to receive his letters. It was such a joy to meet his friends and family, and see his smiling face.

"It was extremely emotional to actually see him face to face. He has grown into a handsome young man, and told me he considers me and Peter as extended family, almost like godparents.

"We are confident and pleased to know he is part of a very loving extended family, and through the project he will continue to grow and be a role model for younger children."

The couple have sponsored Samya through child development charity Compassion UK, who work with over 1.7 million children around the world.

Peter and Jane's sponsorship of £25 a month, enable Samya to receive nutritious meals, medical care and an education.



In India Peter and Jane Baxter meet 17-year-old Samya, who they have sponsored since he was 10

Dismissed thief kept collecting charity tins

A SHAMELESS drug addict repeatedly stole from a charity by continuing to pick up collection boxes after he was sacked due to theft, a court heard.

Shafakat Hussain also terrified a 17-year-old girl during a burglary.

Hussain was sacked by Sweet4Smiles amid fears he was taking cash intended for the charity, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told. But the 41-year-old continued to pick up its collection boxes and pocketed the cash.

Mr David Bennett, prosecuting, said police found CCTV footage that showed him stealing some of the boxes from the Robin 2 club in Bilston and the Edgbaston offices of Severn Trent Water on September 30 and July 7, respectively.

Then at lunchtime on October 12 a teenaged girl heard an intruder at her family's home in Charnlemon Avenue, West Bromwich, where she was alone.

Hid

Mr Bennett continued: "She phoned her mother and then heard footstep slowly coming upstairs and hid in a cupboard. Not long afterwards the burglar opened the cupboard door and the pair came face to face."

Hussain, who had convictions for 17 previous offences, turned and fled with a £250 camera. The teenager told police: "I was scared witless and never want to be afraid as that again."

Less than two hours later the camera was sold at a

Cash Converters store in West Bromwich by the defendant's partner, Claire Kierczek, aged 31, from Buffery Road, Netherton. She was arrested the following day at the Sandfield Road, Stone Cross, address where the pair were then living.

Police found Hussain hiding in the attic when they returned 24 hours later.

Mr Jason Patel, defending, said the couple had been together for 14 years but lost their home after falling into debt when Hussain became hooked on cocaine and heroin.

They were staying with friends when the offences were committed but are now each living with their respective parents, the court was told.

Hussain, of Richmond Road, Dudley, admitted theft and burglary. He was jailed for 22 months by Judge James Burbidge QC. Kierczek pleaded guilty to disposing of criminal property, receiving a two-month prison sentence suspended for 18 months and two-month curfew.

A TOTAL of 80 people have reported themselves victims of 'revenge porn' to West Midlands Police, including 13 teenagers.

A new law was introduced in England and Wales over sharing sexually explicit images without the subject's consent in April last year.

Of 80 reported cases since the new law was introduced in April last year, 70 of the victims were women.

More than half the total number of complaints involved

victims in their 20s, with 13 teenagers also targeted. The oldest victim was in their 60s.

The figures, released following a Freedom of Information request, also revealed only 15 suspects were charged following the 80 complaints. Six others received a caution.

Sarah Green, acting director at the End Violence Against Women Coalition, said the introduction of the law had been an important step forward.

Teenagers among 80 revenge porn victims

Councillors run up £5m allowances bill

COUNCILLORS in the Black Country and Staffordshire received nearly £5 million in allowances and expenses during the last financial year.

Black Country councils each paid out sums nearing £1m during 2014/15.

In Dudley councillors picked up a total of £842,446 in allowances and expenses. In Wolverhampton the figure was £928,231 and in Sandwell £929,176. Councillors in Walsall received £847,812.

The Taxpayers' Alliance called the findings 'shocking' and called on councillors to 'show restraint'.

Dudley Council's leader Pete Lowe said: "Our allowances are lower than most of our Black Country neighbours and we work hard to ensure we provide value for money for the people of the borough." Sandwell Council leader Darren Cooper, said: "We have made a conscious decision not to increase members' allowances during the six years I have been leader of the council."

Meanwhile, Staffordshire County Council paid out £931,221. Stafford Borough Council's figure was much lower, with its members receiving £317,871.

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Afternoon tea a royal celebration

West Mids Federation

WEST Midlands Federation of Townswomen's Guild will be hosting several events for all guild members throughout the coming year. The first event will be an afternoon tea to celebrate the 90th birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. This will be held in Wollaston Village Hall on Thursday, May 19.

The annual inter guild general knowledge quiz will be held on Monday, June 6 at Stourbridge Football Club, Amblecote.

Guilds are requested to select teams of four members to take part and may enter more than one team.

All members of the Federation Committee will be attending the National AGM being held in Bournemouth on Tuesday, June 28. There is a "Music Night" to be held on the previous evening which the committee will be attending.

The annual lunch will be held at the Vesuvio restaurant, Victoria Passage, Stourbridge on Monday July 25. All members are invited to attend.

Further details of events for the second half of 2016 will be announced later.

James was born in Dudley and when he

Whale of a time with talk on film director



The Bride of Frankenstein, directed by James Whale

Film director Whale

Penn Townswomen's Guild

finished school in 1910, he enrolled at Dudley School of Arts & Crafts studying photography as an evening student. His day job was at Beans Industries making copper fenders. By July 1916 he had enlisted and became a Commissioned Officer losing his Black Country accent in the process.

In September 1917 he was taken prisoner but then after the war he started acting in small parts at the Old Rep, moving to Universal Pictures in Hollywood and directing films on Frankenstein. It was most interesting talk about someone who 'made good' from the Black Country.

Meetings are held at Penn United Community Hall, Penn Road at 7.15pm. New members and visitors are welcome.

Speaker leaves members in a flutter

Client Gardening Club

cies of butterflies and 600 species of moths to be found in the UK.

The chairman thanked Patrick for an entertaining and informative talk. He reminded members of the next meeting on April 1. Adam Greathead

will give a talk on "Duck Ponds – A Garden Divided".

Meetings are held at Client Village Hall. Visit <https://clientgardeningclub.wordpress.com> or call chairman Martin Grange on 01562 883009.

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Easter Sunday Closed, Bank Holiday Monday 10am - 4pm, Tuesday 29th 10am - 4pm



Get tough call on phone drivers

THE West Midlands Police Commissioner has called for tougher penalties for people caught using their mobile phones while driving.

David Jamieson said he wants to see increased fines and more penalty points for drivers who flout the law, as well as an extension to cover other electronic devices.

It comes as a Government consultation on increasing the penalties given to drivers who break the current laws came to an end.

Mr Jamieson said: "Thirteen years ago I was the minister that brought the ban on the use of mobile phones while driving because it was a hazard to people on the roads."

"I want to see the Government act now, and I'm calling upon them to increase the fine and the penalty points and extend the ban to other electronic devices."

West Midlands Police caught nearly 2,500 people using mobile phones while driving in 2014.

£45k signal crossing aims to boost safety for schoolchildren

A £45,000 pedestrian crossing will be installed at a Netherton traffic trouble spot after residents expressed concerns for children's safety due to the speed and volume of vehicles.

The signalised 'puffin' crossing will be installed on the junction of Swan Street not far from Hillcrest School and Community College.

Bosses said that the children had been the 'driving force' behind the campaign to install a safer way for them to cross the traffic-heavy road that runs from the busy Cinder Bank island.

Councillor Hilary Bills, cabinet member for

environmental services, said: "Our main concern was for the children crossing the road coming back and forth from school."

"We tried looking around at lots of different places around the junction to make it safe and fit in with regulations."

"Our three ward councillors have worked together very well in this instance."

"It is a very busy road and so to be able to ensure that the children were safe when crossing was our main driving force. The great thing is that it will make the road a lot safer."

The crossing will cost around £45,000 to install with costs coming from the Safer Route to School scheme.

The crossing will see a loss of two on-street parking spaces as part of the installation.

Full backing from Hillcrest School was given during a consultation period that ran from March to April last year.

A single written objection was received on the grounds of the removal of on-street parking and also the crossing's proximity to the Swan Street junction.

The zigzag markings on southern side of crossing will be amended and a solid area of white thermoplastic will be laid to define the end of the right turn lane.

A council decision report stated: "It is acknowledged that the removal of parking spaces will not be popular with the business but at a further meeting on February 29 the majority of ward members agreed that community road safety should be the priority."

Woman cut free after car crash



The aftermath of the smash which left three people injured and in need of hospital treatment

THREE people have been hurt, including a woman who had to be cut free from her vehicle, in a four-car smash in Gornal Wood. Two of the vehicles overturned in the collision.

Fire crews received a call to Tansey Green Road at around 6pm on Sunday evening after the crash left two cars on their sides and two others with extensive damage.

Chris Kowalew, a West Midlands Ambulance Service spokesman, said: "A woman passenger in one of the cars had a broken arm. She was trapped and, with the help of the fire service, was freed through the vehicle's front windscreen. She was immobilised and taken to Russells Hall Hospital."

A 74-year-old driver, called Alan Onslow, in one of the cars involved, was also taken to Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital where he was believed to be treated for shock.

25,000 jobs plan for Black Country

PLANS have been unveiled to turn the Black Country into the UK's High Value Manufacturing City, adding £1 billion to the local economy and creating more than 25,000 jobs.

The scheme is targeting 370 acres of land for new factories and businesses.

To pull in the investment needed, the plan was being launched on the internet at the MIPIM international property conference held in the South of France. The online platform is described as 'innovative and interactive'.

Delegates from the Black Country's Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) – the joint body of civic and business leaders – launched the platform at MIPIM, one of the world's biggest business events for developers and investors. Tom Westley, of the Black Country LEP, said: "The Black Country has the potential to generate massive opportunities in investment."

See hvmcity.com for more information.

Car park is a winner

THE Intu Merry Hill Shopping Centre in Brierley Hill has won an award for one of its car parks.

The newly refurbished Purple Car Park was announced as winner of the best car park refurbishment category at the recent British Parking Awards.

Intu Merry Hill's multi-storey car park received a major revamp in time for the Christmas rush.

The middle deck of the car park had been closed for four years and the revamped meant 350 added spaces.

Sedgley is a Fairtrade town

SEDGLEY has been named a Fairtrade town for the next two years after helping raise awareness of the plight of farmers in developing countries.

The town renewed its status after officials said it had worked on a number of initiatives over the past 12 months.

International body The Fairtrade Foundation says the town has worked to promote a fair price being paid to farmers for the food they produce.

The town's Fairtrade Steering Group revealed its plans to promote Fairtrade to more churches, schools and community groups in the area.

During the recent Fairtrade Fortnight several events were held including a coffee morning at the Co-op supermarket.

Group members meet at the Co-op coffee bar at 3.30pm with the next meeting on May 18.

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Bumper turnout anticipated for town trail milestone

THE countdown to this year's Dudley Trail has started as walkers are being urged to put their best foot forward in May by signing up to one of the longest-running events in the borough.

This year will mark the 36th anniversary of this annual event and organisers are hoping to attract more people, of all ages, than ever before.

The Dudley trail takes place on Sunday, May 1, and walks of six, nine, 12, 20 and 28 miles are on offer with routes covering the hidden beauty and proud industrial heritage of the borough.

The event offers participants a choice of challenges from a six-mile gentle walk stroll to a 28-mile trek for more seasoned walkers.

The event is being organised in association with Action Heart and is supported by Let's Get Active and sponsors K2 Security.

Online registration is now available on the Dudley Council website at www.dudley.gov.uk/dudleytrail

Councillor Kurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for visitor economy and cultural services, said: "This event always proves to be very popular in the borough's calendar. It provides a great way for people of all abilities to get involved at the website.

and enjoy the sights of the borough, as well as providing an opportunity to make new friends and exercise. It also offers walks for more seasoned walkers, designed to challenge their stamina."

All walks start from Dudley Leisure Centre at Wellington Road in the town centre, times varying between 8am and noon.

Checkpoints are placed along each of the five routes to ensure the wellbeing of walkers, and light refreshments are available. Everyone who completes a trail receives a certificate.

Pre-booking costs £3 per person for the 28 and 20-mile routes, £2.50 for the 12 and nine-miler and £1.50 to walk the six-mile route. An additional 50p will be charged for all entries on the day. Entry forms are also available to download at the website.



Members of the Himley Walk Fit Group ready for the Dudley Trail events which lead from the town centre

MP says the critics are 'snobs'

DUDLEY North MP Ian Austin has told critics of the town's ferris wheel attraction to stop sniping and come and see it from themselves.

The attraction, which is in the town for a month, became a national talking point last week when figures including Piers Morgan talked it down.

The Sun newspaper also waded in to mock the wheel, branding it 'Dud-Eye'.

The DY Eye was described as the 'worst tourist attraction in Britain' while the outspoken Morgan said he could think of no grimmer panorama than Dudley'.

Now Labour MP Mr Austin has leapt to the defence of the wheel in Dudley. He said: "I'm inviting the snobs in the national media to come to Dudley and take a trip with me on the wheel."

Wake up the zoo animals

ANIMAL fans can find out what it's like to wake up some of the rarest creatures in the world. Dudley Zoo is offering visitors the chance to join keepers as they begin their daily duties on April 24.

Starting at 8.45am, the behind-the-scenes tour lasts approximately two hours and finishes with a breakfast bap and hot drink in the Queen Mary Restaurant. Tickets cost £40 for adults and £30 per child. Call 0844 474 2272.

Tectons are icons of a past era

DUDLEY Zoo's historically significant Tecton buildings were put under the spotlight during a visit by members of Twentieth Century architecture.

Twenty-five visitors were welcomed by architect Larry Priest to learn about the Heritage Lottery funded project to repair four of the Modernist structures, which had a major influence on 20th century architecture.

The group took part in a walk and talk around the 40-acre site to visit the 12 Tectons while construction supervisor, Carlo Diponio explained about the ongoing repair work.

The landmark wave entrance and Bear Ravine have also been restored along with the Safari Shop which was renovated to provide a new entrance to the zoo offering access from an extended car park.

Lenny's radio role has sting

DUDLEY'S most famous son, actor and comedian Sir Lenny Henry, is to star in a new monologue show on BBC Radio 4.

Lenny will have a role in Rogues Gallery, described as 'darkly comic, genre-bending monologues'.

Four 15-minute episodes are due to air in May.

A BBC spokesman said: "Every episode will feature a new character telling their tale, each of which have a sting in their tail."

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Music venue closes down

A TRENDY music venue in Birmingham is closing after it announced 'overheads under tough conditions'.

Alfie Bird and The Ooblec in Digbeth, Birmingham, last week confirmed it will close with immediate effect.

A statement, written by management on their Facebook page, said: "It is with a heavy heart that we at Alfie Bird & The Ooblec need to admit defeat in our ongoing challenge to get a live music venue within The Custard Factory to work for the long term and as of immediately the venue will be closed permanently."

"It's been a long two years of struggling with our overheads under tough conditions, and has come to the point of no return."

EXPANSION plans for a temple in the Black Country have been approved by council planners.

Proposals for the 21-acre Balaji Temple complex in Tividale will see a 15-metre tall building constructed to house a festival chariot and the laying out of a processional route around the site off Dudley Road East.

John Baker, development and regulatory services manager at Sandwell Council, said: "This is an interesting application. There have been

extensive legal advisories and discussions but the proposed changes do not compromise the proposed right of way across the site."

The temple has grown in the past 15 years to become the largest Hindu temple of its kind in Europe. Temple trustee Dr Venkataramana Rao said the scheme would ensure the temple was better equipped to host some of the key festivals.

Dr Rao said: "At the moment we can't keep the chariot anywhere outside because it's made of wood, that's why we need to build this new building. It's part and parcel of the Hindu community."

Plans were approved subject to the proposed floor levels of the processional route being submitted to and agreed by Sandwell Council. The decision was made at the council's planning committee last week.

Designed with a vaulted roof, the community hall already provides space for functions including weddings.

Facilities include a stage with lighting, private rooms, kitchen and toilets. A play area is also available for children. Summer and winter camps are run from the temple for youngsters and during the school holidays.

Oi, time for the Lambeth Walk

AN AMATEUR theatre company will be performing the comedy musical Me and My Girl in Dudley next month.

Willenhall Music Theatre Company will be performing the show at Dormiston Mill Theatre in Sedgley from April 12 to 16.

Will Phipps, from Dudley, will be playing the role of Bill Snibson, the Cockney geezer who is told he will have to give up his working class girlfriend if he wants to claim his rightful inheritance as the heir to an earldom.

The show, featuring such popular vintage songs as The Lambeth Walk and The Sun Has Got His Hat On, will be performed at 7.30pm on weekday and 2.30pm and 7.30pm on Saturday, April 16.

Tickets cost £15 for adults and £8 for children. To book call 07757808036.

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New presses boost orders



Russell Hartill (right) of Worcester Presses with Moseley Brothers MD John Hickman

TAPPING into the expertise and capabilities of a specialist press supplier has helped a Dudley manufacturer secure a string of new automotive orders.

Moseley Brothers, a leading press tooling and production specialist, has invested more than £500,000 into the purchase of two large Chin Fong presses that will help it increase its capacity, speed and ability for more complex components. The company purchased the machines from Stourbridge-based Worcester Presses.

They are already producing various pressed components for several leading car manufacturers and it is anticipated that more than £1m of orders can be fulfilled every year on the 500 and 400 tonne presses.

John Hickman, managing director of Moseley Brothers, said: "We moved to our new

site in Dudley last year, as part of a £2.5m investment and recognised the need to update our press capability.

"Our relationship with Worcester goes back more than a decade, so we invited their technical team in to discuss our requirements and then present the best possible solution to meet those needs.

He continued: "The answer was two state-of-the-art Chin Fong presses. This has already reaped dividends with new contracts secured to supply larger automotive components. With our pipeline of presswork orders set to grow by 20 per cent in the next 12 months, the increased speed and capacity we now boast is essential."

The Moseley Brothers investment has contributed to a record year for Worcester Presses, with turnover doubling to £2.8m in just twelve months.

Libby's haircut has raised £600 for trust

THE next of kin of a woman who died while staying at a hotel in Shrewsbury have been traced.

Louise Elizabeth Smyth, 34, died while she was a guest at the Shrewsbury Hotel in Bridge Street on March 3. The money will go to helping children affected with hair loss, including cancer patients and youngsters suffering with alopecia.

Proud mother Jessica Toghill said: "Me and Paul (Libby's dad) are so proud of Libby, she has decided to do this off her own back to help little girls who have lost their hair due to illness. Libby said to me 'mine will grow back mum.'

"I would like to thank everyone who has sponsored Libby so far."

Visit www.justgiving.com/Libbys-princess-wigs to Libby's fundraising. The trust helps children with hair loss including giving them wigs. For more information visit www.littleprincesses.org.uk/about-us or call 01432 363505.

Next of kin are found

THE next of kin of a woman who died while staying at a hotel in Shrewsbury have been traced.

Louise Elizabeth Smyth, 34, died while she was a guest at the Shrewsbury Hotel in Bridge Street on March 3. Police say the cause of death is yet to be determined and are awaiting post-mortem results. It is not believed that her death was suspicious.

Miss Smyth was originally from the West Midlands area and had links to Dudley.

UKIP MEP supports mosque unity event

POLITICIANS, police and religious leaders in the Black Country are joining forces to tackle the threat of radicalisation.

Around 500 people from different faiths and backgrounds met at Baitul Atta Mosque, Wolverhampton, with UKIP West Midlands Euro MP Bill Etheridge, Wolverhampton South West Labour MP Rob Morris and representatives of West Midlands Police.

The United Against Extremism event, organised by The Ahmadiyya Muslim Association Wolverhampton, was held to launch a campaign to distribute half a million leaflets informing people of how best to deal with radicalisation and fundamentalism.

Safeguard

Mr Etheridge said: "To safeguard our communities we need to work together as a unit, irrespective of faith, political parties, colour or creed."

"Terrorists have no faith, no religion or sympathy. They will kill anyone. This has to stop."

"These are dangerous times, where people of peace and of decent values have to pull together. It is not useful or helpful to label people as 'the other'."

"I've travelled across the European continent regularly with my job and it's like a war zone, there are soldiers everywhere you look. People are on edge, people are distrustful, people are worried. The world is changing. We have to unite in peace and harmony with each other, with the people who contribute to this country, civilised decent people."

"UKIP are not against immigration, we are about controlling the numbers."

Reverend John Bennett and Mr Marras also spoke at the event.

The mosque is keen to make people aware that the fundamentalist views held by terrorists are in the minority, with most Muslims part of a moderate community of acceptance and tolerance.

Toby Ephram, outreach coordinator and president of pan-African Ahmadiyya Muslim Association Midlands, said: "These terrorists are not interested in what religion you are, what culture you are from, they are just interested in causing destruction. It is time to unite."

Muhammad Ashraf, regional president of Ahmadiyya Muslim Association in Wolverhampton, hoped the 'Islam's response to extremism' leaflets would help understanding.



Joining forces against extremism – Toby Ephram, UKIP's Bill Etheridge, Maqsood Saeed and Kashif Bhatti

MP concern at too many zero hour contracts

NEARLY 70,000 people are on 'zero hours' contracts across the West Midlands, new figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reveal.

A total of 69,000 workers in the region were not guaranteed minimum hours in their job. The total represents 2.6 per cent of the region's workforce.

Across the country, 801,000 people were employed on the controversial contracts.

The figures were as of December last year – an increase of 2.3 per cent on the same period in 2014. The national figure represents 2.5 percent of the UK's entire workforce, according to the study.

Zero-hours contracts, or casual contracts, allow employers to hire staff with no guarantee of work.

They have proved highly controversial – with concerns they do not offer financial stability and security.

Confidence

Dudley North MP Ian Austin said: "Too many local people on zero-hours contracts have told me they don't know how many hours they'll get to work from one day to the next and some job security is non-existent."

"These 'no promises' contracts are another sign that working people aren't feeling a recovery and businesses still don't have the confidence to take people on permanently."

The Labour MP continued: "Much more action is needed to ban zero-hours

By Rob Cox

exploitation, with an end to zero-hours workers being forced to make themselves available even when there's no work for them."

People on zero-hours contracts were more likely to be young, in part-time work, women, or in full-time education when compared with other people in employment.

The figures also showed, on average, someone on a zero-hours contract usually worked 26 hours a week.

Around one in three on a zero-hours contract wanted more hours. In comparison, 10 per cent of other people in employment wanted more hours.

Nick Palmer, a statistician for the ONS, said: "This latest figure is rather higher than the 697,000 people who said they were on these contracts in late 2014."

"Though at least some of this increase may be due to greater public recognition of the term 'zero-hours contract', there's also nothing to suggest this form of employment is in decline."

Dudley group expand

THE Black Country arm of a US manufacturing group has swooped to buy a Staffordshire welding company.

The price tag has not been revealed but it gives the UK arm of Manufacturing Technology a combined turnover in excess of £11 million and a workforce of 85. Based in Kingswinford, the group includes MTI Welding and British Federal. Its latest acquisition is Prospot in Tamworth.

Drink-driving car valet is locked up over weapons find

A COURT heard that a terrified neighbour called police after spotting a man with a gun in a Dudley street.

The anonymous caller also gave details of a Ford Focus that was traced to 35-year-old Banaris Ali, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told. When police swooped on his bedsit in a multi-occupied address in Fir Street, Kates Hill, he was not at home but they found a stun gun disguised as a mobile phone and a small amount of cannabis, said Mr Timothy Sapwell, prosecuting.

The Ford Focus drove past the property at high speed but was caught by police. They discovered a gas operated BB gun that looked like a semi-automatic pistol.

Car valet Ali – who also failed a drink-drive test – said he had been outside the address with the BB gun to 'move on' strangers who had been sitting outside in a van. He said they had given him 'bad feelings'. Mr Sapwell said: "He confessed that he would have threatened them with the weapon if they had not left."

Ali said he found the stun gun in the street and initially thought it was a mobile phone. After discovering it was a Taser he decided to keep it for his own protection, being unaware this was illegal.

Mr Richard Partridge, defending, said: "This is not a man of violence. He was just foolish. There had been a number of break-ins at the flats and perhaps this was the reason for the paranoia. He did not have a charger for the Taser."

Ali admitted possession of a disguised weapon and imitation firearm, and drink-driving. He was jailed for two years and nine months.

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COMPETITION

Get pizza the action at this refurb eaterie

PizzaExpress is celebrating the launch of its exciting new-look restaurant in Stourbridge by offering 10 fabulous prizes of a meal for two to the value of £40.

Located in a distinctive listed building in the heart of Stourbridge, the restaurant has been totally transformed and includes new artwork reflecting the building's former use as an upmarket tea room.

Each PizzaExpress restaurant is individually designed – often using well-known places, people or historical events from the area as the basis. During the 1960s, the Stourbridge building was known as Cranage's Tea Rooms and Royal Turf Lounge Bar.

Drawing inspiration from this, the artwork shows cakes, bread and other items sold at there. Today, though,

it is tasty pizzas as well as delightful desserts on the menu.

Manager, Louise Kitson, said, "We love our restaurant's new look and have a friendly and enthusiastic team who are looking forward to welcoming everyone over a delicious pizza."

PizzaExpress has been dishing up fresh, handmade pizza to Stourbridge since 1999. This spring sees the launch of new specials including, for the first time in PizzaExpress' 51-year history, a Hawaiian pizza, as well as the first-ever gluten-free dough balls and a refreshed Leggera Superfood Salad which comes in under 500 calories.

For younger pizza-lovers, PizzaExpress' Piccolo menu is full of tasty choices including 'Create Your Own' pizza, and starts at just £3.95.



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Mary Poppins is practically perfect

REVIEW

by Leon Burakowski

Mary Poppins
Birmingham Hippodrome

THERE IS ONLY ONE WORD TO DESCRIBE THIS SHOW, AND IT'S A LONG ONE – SUPERCALIFRAGILISTICEXPIALIDOCIOUS!

The Disney organisation and theatre impresario Cameron Mackintosh have joined forces to bring the magical nanny to the stage in a spit-spot spectacular that will surely satisfy fans of the classic family movie musical.

This revival of the revamp penned by Downton Abbey writer Julian Fellowes and directed by Richard Eyre has lots of West End class with its well-drilled performers, impressive sets and stunning special effects.

A lot rests on the shoulders of young actress Zizi Strallen as the enchanted childminder, and Bonnie Langford's niece is practically perfect in every way for the role.

Dancer

She is a superb dancer, having been a member of Matthew Bourne's company (Bourne co-directs and choreographs this production) and also has an impressive voice in a show with several powerful female singers.

But what she has even more of is charisma, conveying with flashing eyes, pristine posture and her forthright no-nonsense dialogue the essence of PL Travers' super-nanny. Her performance is informed by Julie Andrews but Miss Strallen brings something new to the role – more magical mystery and youthful energy.

She has a fine partner in Australian song and dance man Matt Lee (a Frank Skinner lookalike). His gravi-



Zizi Strallen as enchanted nanny Mary Poppins Photo by Johan Persson

ty-defying stunts, irrepressible energy and fine singing make for a memorable Bert, as he sweeps Poppins off her feet and onto the rooftops of London.

The show is largely loyal to the film but the movie's animated sequences are replaced with new scenes. These include an incredibly colourful park routine, which seems to co-opt Wonderland and Narnia, a creepy scene where the Banks' children's ill-treated toys come to life and a delirious number involving Caribbean word-seller Mrs Corry (Wreh-Asha Walton).

New songs from George Stiles and Anthony Drewe fit in well with the Sherman brothers' originals.

A team of youngsters will be taking turns as Jane and Michael Banks, with Georgie Hill and Jabez Cheeseman in sparkly form as the mischievous youngsters on Press Night.

Just like Mary Poppins and her magic umbrella, this show is a soaring success, so get a ticket quick before the wind changes direction. The show continues in Birmingham until April 23.

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Warning over Brexit threat to town's £28m rail system

PLANS for a £28 million light rail system to take train passengers into Dudley for the first time in 50 years could be thrown into doubt if Britain leaves the European Union, says a transport boss.

A light rail innovation centre has been earmarked for the town to transport visitors from Dudley Port station, near Tipton, to the former station at the bottom of Castle Hill.

But it has been claimed that funding for the scheme could come under threat should Brexit camp prevail in the June 23 EU referendum.

It comes after concerns were raised over the EU impact on the future of the region's rail and tram networks post-Brexit, with plans to extend the Midland Metro reliant on tranches of funding from Europe.

Roger Lawrence, chairman of the West Midlands Integrated Transport

Authority (ITA), said leaving the EU would be 'unlikely' to affect current plans for the Metro – but it could 'cut off' funding for projects in the fields of innovation, including the Dudley line.

"In the past a lot of EU money has gone towards infrastructure and we have seen those benefits across the region," he said.

"Now more of the focus is centred around innovation, employment skills and training. The very light rapid transit scheme in Dudley is one that might come under threat or be slowed down should EU funding no longer be available."

Around £4.5m of the project's funding has been offered through the Local Growth Fund, with £9.4m from third party private sector investors and £13.9m from the European Regional Development Fund.



An artist's impression of the hub of the £28 million light rail system bringing passengers to Dudley

Death of a former E&S manager, aged 74

A FORMER circulation manager at the Express & Star, who worked on the newspaper for nearly half a century, has died at the age of 74.

Bryan Taylor had first joined the paper at just 15 and went on to become the operations manager for the circulation department at the Express & Star's Queen Street headquarters in Wolverhampton.

After living in Pensnett after they were first married, Bryan and his wife Christine moved to Wall Heath and lived in the same house for 44 years, raising their two daughters Joy and Imogen.

By the 1990s Bryan was running the sales and canvassing across the newspaper's circulation area, organising deliveries to more than 1,800 newsagents through a fleet of 70 vans.

Golf

He took early retirement in 2003 but even then frequently returned to help out when his old department was under pressure.

Daughter Joy Duffy said: "I think he must have done more than half century in the end; he absolutely loved the paper."

"He had been helping out his brother Ernie, who already worked at the Express & Star, for a while before the paper offered him a job back in 1956. And I think he was popping back in to help out for two or three years after he formally retired."

The Express & Star was one of the three faces of Dad's life. Another was golf, which remained a passion after he retired. He was a member of the Star's golf society, as well as Swindon Golf Club, and he loved the social side of the game.



Mr Taylor seen at his desk

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Awareness of abuse risk for youngsters

AN AWARENESS drive has been carried out across Dudley to highlight the dangers of child sexual exploitation.

Dudley Council officials have worked with groups from across the borough's voluntary sector this week on an awareness roadshow.

The Mayor of Dudley, Councillor Steve Walther, joined the roadshow in Dudley's market place to promote the 'see me, hear me' campaign.

The campaign highlights the issue and its long-term impact on young people.

The promotional stand has already been in Stourbridge, Brierley Hill, Sedgley and Halesowen.

Councillor Walther said: "It's an horrendous crime and one which clearly needs to be highlighted."

"It's a real credit to Dudley that agencies across the borough are working so closely together to make sure the message gets out there."

Find out more on the campaign by visiting www.seeme-hear-me.org.uk or speak to Dudley's CSE team on 01384 817777 or Barnardo's on 0121 3595333.

Hollywood glamour

A FASHION expert from Dudley whose modelling career included hosting parties for Hollywood stars like George Clooney, will transform a Birmingham shopping centre into a giant catwalk.

Top models will be showcasing the latest trends and styles at Fashion on the Move, a series of free fashion and dance shows at Northfield Shopping Centre.

The event on April 2 from 11am is being hosted by former Bridgnorth Endowed School pupil Sally Mansell, whose international modelling career began in Birmingham.

She has since worked alongside Hollywood A-listers such as George Clooney and Matt Wahlberg, modelled for London designer Caroline Charles, launched cars with Aston Martin and helped tennis star Annabel Croft raise money in memory of Princess Diana.

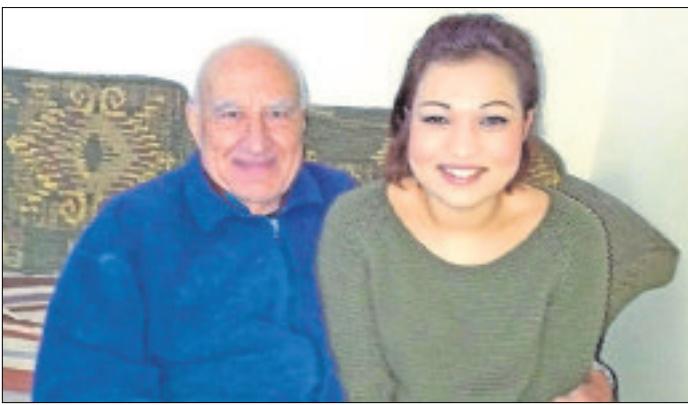
Another record as airport figures soar

BIRMINGHAM Airport has celebrated another record month with February passenger figures up 9.4 per cent on the year.

It was the 12th month in a row of record numbers of people flying to and from the airport. A total of 690,347 passengers travelled through the airport last month, up 59,000 on the same month in 2015.

Long-haul destinations are continuing to prove popular with growth up by more than 19 per cent compared to February last year. Short-haul were up 7.9 per cent.

Chief executive Paul Kehoe said: "A whole year of outstanding passenger figures is something that will go down in the airport's history. The next few weeks will see a rapid expansion to the selection of airlines flying from Birmingham as we introduce Qatar, CSA, Iberia and Blue Air as well as the magnificent Emirates Airbus A380 aircraft."



Artist, athlete and former detective inspector John Edwards, of Brierley Hill, with his wife Rumana

Policeman turned artist has died at the age of 83

AN EX-POLICEMAN turned globe-trotting artist who met his wife while on travels in Bangladesh has died aged 83.

John Edwards served in the force for 25 years and also an accomplished artist.

His wife Rumana, 42, has paid tribute to him providing an insight into his eventful life.

John, or Jedd as he was known, was born in Brierley Hill in 1932. Before carving out a successful career in the police, he had attended art college in the town and worked for advertising agency Murray Watson.

He did National Service in the

RAF and then joined the police force aged 21.

He soon became known as a talented athlete who took part in force running competitions.

After 25 years service, and having risen to the rank of detective inspector, Mr Edwards retired to pursue his second career as an artist. But he continued producing amusing cartoons for the police magazine until 2006 when the final issue was published. "He understood what makes the police laugh at themselves which was depicted in the McBoot cartoons," said Rumana.

The couple, who lived in Malvern, have a daughter Zara, aged 22.

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OUR PRICE £18,999

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Cost New £24,315



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- DAB radio
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- front & rear parking sensors with reversing camera

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- DAB radio
- auto lights & wipers
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- privacy glass
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Wolverhampton WV10 6HT
01902 690601

Pervert had over 5,000 porn images of children

THE sickening child porn shame of a sexually depraved Stourbridge man has been revealed after a court heard how he downloaded more than 5,000 indecent films and pictures of children – including babies.

Brett Clewes also took indecent photographs of two women and took another up the skirt of a young girl in Stourbridge town centre.

Clewes, a man of previous good character, of Finchfield Close, Stourbridge, was described as being a 'socially inept' man with few friends.

Recorder Abigail Nixon told the 43-year-old: "Without sexually depraved people like you there would be no demand for these indecent images."

Risk

"Women of all ages are at risk from your perverted needs."

At Wolverhampton Crown Court, Clewes admitted seven charges of making indecent images of children and one of taking an indecent photograph of a child.

He further admitted recording a person in a private act and four charges of possessing indecent photographs.

Christopher O'Gorman, prosecuting, said that intelligence was received by police about Clewes using a website based in Russia, which was used by people with a sexual interest in children.

People using the site were making comments about

their shared interest in paedophilia.

When officers went to Clewes' home they seized his computer equipment, which was found to contain the indecent images.

Defence barrister Nicholas Berry told the court that Clewes, who was also made the subject of a Sexual Harm Prevention Order until further notice, had already taken major steps to resolve his problems.

Mr Berry said: "He has demonstrated since his arrest conduct to a person of a private act and four charges of possessing indecent photographs.

He said: "Computers and technology followed and they came to dominate him. It was then his perverted interest surfaced."

Clewes was jailed for 30 months and was also placed on the sex offenders list.

Made in Britain bus fleet to get more environment friendly

NATIONAL Express is buying more environmentally-friendly buses to cover every part of the Black Country.

The public transport company, which runs bus services and operates the Midland Metro in the West Midlands, is expanding its fleet of high-tech grey-painted Platinum buses following their successful introduction in May last year.

National Express is spending £15 million to buy 65 more this year with the first expected to be on the road in the summer.

Platinum buses currently operate on eight routes across Birmingham, Solihull, Coventry and Walsall.

The £34m fleet of 58 buses give passengers free wifi, extra leg room and high-backed comfy seats.

They are built in Britain by Alexander Dennis and are lighter and more fuel efficient than conventional buses and their Euro 6 engines are among the cleanest in the world.

The buses currently operate on the 900, 957, X51, 997, 984, 935, 936 and 937 routes. A recent survey showed passengers are impressed with the new vehicles, with satisfaction across all the Platinum routes 94 per cent.

Also 98 per cent were satisfied with the comfort they experienced on the bus, 96 per cent said they were happy with the standard of driving and 81 per cent found the services good value for money.

fast theticket

Hello!

Adele gigs preview

See Page 23



Right formula

Qemists – Page 23



NATIVE MONSTER

Entertainment Unleashed

For full listings see **Express & Star** every Friday

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11 JUN • SUNNY AFTERNOON
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& LOCH LOMOND CRUISE



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4 NIGHTS HALF BOARD Admton House Hotel
• Isle of Arran tour & Loch Lomond Cruise

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3 DAYS £99.95

TWO NIGHTS HALF BOARD Hackett York House Hotel
• Includes tour of the Southern Lakes calling at Grasmere and Bowness on Windermere

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LEGOLAND WINDSOR



2 DAYS £99.95

OVERNIGHT BED & BREAKFAST
• Includes admission to Legoland on both days

SAT 2 APR, 4, 25 JUN, 16, 23 JUL, 6, 13 AUG

LIVERPOOL BEATLES & CHESTER



2 for 1
BAR
6pm-9pm
(T&C APPLY)

5 DAYS FROM £189.95
4 NIGHTS HALF BOARD Adelphi Hotel
• Includes Beatles Tour & Cavern Club, Mersey River Cruise & Visit to Chester

MON 18 APR, 16 MAY, 13, 27 JUN, 11, 25 JUL, 1 AUG

TORQUAY & EDEN PROJECT



4/5 DAYS FROM £159.95

3/4 NIGHTS HALF BOARD Seascape/Bancourt Hotel
• Admission included to Eden Project

4 DAYS FRI 22, 29 APR, 17 JUN, 22, 29 JUL

5 DAYS MON 18, 25 APR, 16 MAY, 13, 20, 27 JUN

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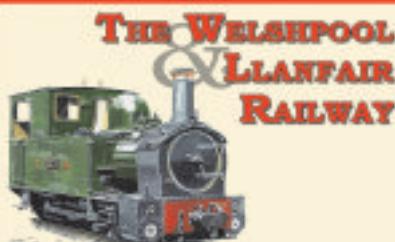
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TIMETABLES & TICKETS - www.wllr.org.uk
OR CALL - 01938 510441

The Vamps



Friday and Saturday, 6pm

Genting Arena, B'ham

The British boyband pop-rockers come to Brum as part of their world tour following the success of second album Wake Up with supports from Conor Maynard, The Tide and Hometown. Visit www.gentingarena.co.uk

POP & ROCK

The Magic Of Motown

Sat at 8pm, £24.50
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, ST16 2LT. Call 01785 254653

A-Ha

Tue at 6pm, £30.20 - £75.70
Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham, B1 2AA. Call 0121 780 4141

Room 94

Wed at 7pm,
O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB. Call 0121 622 8250

Left For Red

Sat at 6pm,
O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB. Call 0121 622 8250

Altered Sky

Thu at 7pm,
The Rainbow, Birmingham, B12 0LD. Call 0121 753 1818

Nai Harvest

Wed at 7pm - 11pm,
The Rainbow, Birmingham, B12 0LD. Call 0121 753 1818

Refused

Sat at 6pm,
The Institute, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DY. Call 0121 643 0428

Quinphonic Festival 2

Sun at 3pm - 11pm,
The RoadHouse Birmingham, B30 3DZ. Call 0121 246 2273

Sunset Sons

Wed at 7pm - 11pm,
The Institute, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DY. Call 0121 643 0428

Morpheus Rising

Sun at 7.30pm,
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

Shane Filan

Sat at 7.30pm - 10pm,
Symphony Hall, Birmingham, B1 2EA. Call 0121 780 3333

Kick Up The 80s: 80s Tribute

Fri at 7.30pm,
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

John Otway & Wild Willy Barrett

Thu at 7.30pm,
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

Purson

Wed at 8pm,
The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham, B5 4EG. Call 0121 632 6756

Check out full listings in **the ticket** in Friday's Express & Star

Richard Herring



Saturday, 7pm

Slade Rooms, W'ton

The 12th solo stand-up tour by Herring sees the comedian examine whether being a husband and father means he is finally fulfilled in new show Happy Now? Visit www.wolvescivic.co.uk

Dynamo: Seeing Is Believing



Sat and Sun, times vary

Barclaycard Arena, B'ham

Due to demand magician Dynamo has added these extra dates at the city centre mega-venue with evening performances and a Sunday matinee, in a tour being seen by 400,000 fans. Visit www.barclaycardarena.co.uk

Mary Poppins



until April 23

Birmingham Hippodrome

Zizi Strallen is practically perfect in every way as PL Travers' enchanted super-nanny in this spot-spectacular Disney musical based on the famous family movie. www.birminghamhippodrome.com

Vertigo

Sat at 9pm,
The Victoria, Birmingham, B1 1BN. Call 0121 633 9439

Keeping It Soulful

Fri - Sat at 9pm - 2am,
The Victoria, Birmingham, B1 1BN. Call 0121 633 9439

Propaganda

Fri - Sat at 10.30pm - 3.30am,
O2 Academy Birmingham, B1 1DB. Call 0121 622 8250

ART GALLERIES

Birmingham People And Change In The Inner-City

Fri at 10.30am - 5pm, Sat at 10am - 5pm, Sun at 10am - 5pm, Mon at 10am - 5pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, B3 3DH. Call 0121 303 1966

Chance, Order, Change: Abstract Paintings 1939-1989

Sat at 11am - 5pm, Sun at 11am - 5pm, Mon at 10am - 5pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm,

Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, B3 3DH. Call 0121 414 7333

Laura Lancaster

Fri at 10am - 5pm, Sat at 10am - 5pm, Sun at 12pm - 4pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm,

The New Art Gallery Walsall, WS2 8LG. Call 01922 654400

Jan Vanriet The Music Boy

Fri at 10am - 5pm, Sat at 10am - 5pm, Sun at 12pm - 4pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm,

The New Art Gallery Walsall

Mental Spaces

Fri at 9am - 8.30pm, Sat at 9am, Sun at 9am, Mon at 9am - 8.30pm, Tue at 9am - 8.30pm, Wed at 9am - 8.30pm, Thu at 9am - 8.30pm,

Light House, Wolverhampton, WV1 1HT. Call 01902 716055

Willard Wigan Homecoming Exhibition

Fri - Thu Light House, Wolverhampton, WV1 1HT. Call 01902 716055

Dinh Q Le: The Colony

Fri at 11am - 5pm, Sat at 11am - 5pm, Tue at 11am - 5pm, Wed at 11am - 5pm, Thu at 11am - 5pm,

Ikon Gallery, 1 Oozells Street, Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2HS. Call 0121 248 0708

TALKS

Gordon Buchanan - Lost Adventures

Wed at 7.30pm,
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, ST16 2LT. Call 01785 254653

Adlais (Echo) - Melodic And Mythic Stories And Songs

Sat at 7.30pm,
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, ST16 2LT. Call 01785 254653

CLUBBING

The Rainbow Venues' Festival: Chapter 12

Sat - Sun The Rainbow, Birmingham, B12 0LD. Call 0121 753 1818

Conya Doss

Thu at 7pm,
Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath, Birmingham, B14 7JZ. Call 0844 870 0000

Qemists stick to alternative formula



Hardcore electro-rockers Qemists are visiting Wolverhampton Slade Rooms tonight with Japan's Crossfaith

BRIGHTON rocks – and the latest band from the city by the sea, that's become a hotbed of punk, electro and other alternative sounds, is electro-rock quintet The Qemists.

Storming first single Run You, from new album Warrior Sound, featured on the trailer for Arnold Schwarzenegger movie Terminator Genisys and ITV's coverage of the Rugby World Cup.

Bruno Balanta, one half of the

band's vocal output, says: "We're Rage Against The Machine meets The Prodigy meets Public Enemy. The music encompasses our rock influences, urban ethics and the heavy dance-infused electronics we love."

The band that have toured with Korn and Enter Shikari are not about to embrace the mainstream.

"Are we going to end up going all commercial and making really poppy sounding tracks? No, that's never

going to happen because we're fans first and foremost of the type of music we're making. Why give up what you care about for cash?"

"For the last 16 months we've been pouring blood, sweat, and tears into our new album and I'm buzzing to unleash this record on the world live."

Tonight (Thursday) they are at Wolverhampton's Slade Rooms with Japanese electro-metal icons Crossfaith.



Adele says Hello Brum

SHE'S the hottest ticket in town, in fact, Adele is the hottest ticket in any town... and she's coming to Birmingham Genting Arena for four nights of concerts.

The Brit School graduate from Tottenham is the great British music success story of the early 21st century.

In just six years since her debut album 19 in 2008, followed by 21 in 2011 and 25 last year, Adele Adkins has become a genuine superstar on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

She won an Oscar for her Bond song Skyfall in 2013 and the same year went to Buckingham Palace to receive the MBE from Prince Charles.

Awards

She has won multiple record industry awards, including Grammys, Ivor Novello and Brits.

Her emotional performance of Someone Like You at the 2011 Brit Awards was credited with propelling her to stardom. That took the song to number one as she became the first artist in the UK since The Beatles to have two top five singles and two top five albums at the same time.

Her concerts on Tuesday and Wednesday, then again on the following Friday and Saturday, are all sold out.

The Birmingham dates mark the end of the British leg of her first tour in four years, since she gave birth to son Angelo, and she will be touring Europe during May and June.

Village jazz club back at new venue

ONE of the West Midlands' favourite jazz clubs is back at a new venue.

Jazz Club 90, in the Shropshire village of Albrighton, near Wolverhampton, built up a loyal following among musicians and jazz fans over 25 years at The Harp pub. New owners meant a move for the organisers, who have found a new venue at Albrighton Sports and Social Club.

It launched last year with a 25th anniversary gig in October and is running twice a month sessions for the jazz-starved denizens of the Wolverhampton and Telford area. Sunday sessions are from 1pm to 3pm, and admission is £5. For more information see www.jazzclub90.co.uk

It's a Grand choice for one-night shows

IT'S a busy week of one-nighters ahead at the Grand Theatre in Wolverhampton.

Indian Punjabi singer, poet and actor Satinder Sartaaj will be in concert tomorrow evening (Friday) with ticket prices ranging from £25 to £100 for the Sufi superstar's performance.

Roll up and maybe throw up when the Circus of Horrors bring their 21st anniversary tour to the Lichfield Street venue on Saturday night.

A Grand Operetta Gala featuring music by Gilbert and Sullivan is on Wednesday. Irish song and dance show Ireland's Call is on Thursday, March 31. Call 01902 429212.

Play for those who miss a Heartbeat

HEARTBEAT, the popular ITV show about police in 1960s rural Yorkshire, is being revived on stage in Birmingham.

The popular Sunday night series with its nostalgic soundtrack ran for 18 years from 1992, based on the Constable books by ex-policeman Peter Walker under pen-name Nicholas Rhea. It originally starred Nick Berry as PC Nick Rowan.

David Lansdale will return in his TV role of David Stockwell, as will Steve Blakeley as PC Geoff Younger, joined by Hollyoaks actor Matt Millburn as PC Joe Malton. It is staged at the New Alexandra Theatre from Monday to Saturday, April 2.

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www.qualityhoteldudley.co.uk
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01384 245700



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Saturday 23rd April

BRISTOL & S.S. GT BRITAIN

Adults £17.00 O.A.P £16.00 Child £14.00

Admission to Boat extra

Saturday 7th May

CHESHIRE OAKS & CHESTER

Adults £16.00 O.A.P £15.00 Child £13.00

Saturday 14th May

LIVERPOOL & ALBERT DOCK

Adults £17.00 O.A.P £16.00 Child £14.00

Saturday 21st May

WELLESBOURNE MARKET & STRATFORD

Adults £14.00 O.A.P £13.00 Child £12.00

NEW BOOKING AGENTS

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Saturday 28th May

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Saturday 4th June

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40, Louise Street, Gornal Wood, Dudley 01902 670387

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1 The Broadway, Castle Hill, Dudley DY1 4QD or check out our website www.thefellowsdudley.co.uk

CHOICE



Queen Elizabeth II

Our Queen at 90 (ITV, 8pm)

To celebrate Elizabeth II's 90th birthday, this documentary has enjoyed privileged access to the Queen and to many members of the Royal Family during the year in which she became the nation's longest-reigning monarch. Prince Charles and his sons William and Harry reveal how she has inspired them, while Prince Andrew and his daughters Beatrice and Eugenie explain what she means to them, while political leaders, celebrities and ordinary people from all over the world reflect on their experiences of meeting her.

BBC1

- 6.00 Breakfast.** **9.00 BBC News.** **10.00** Easter Worship 2016. **11.00** Uri et Ober. **11.25** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.10** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News: Weather. **1.15** Father Brown. (R) **2.00** EastEnders. (C) **2.25** Swinging: The Boat Race. Live coverage of the men's and women's University Boat Races. **5.00** A Question of Sport. (R) **5.30** Songs of Praise. **6.05** Paul O'Grady: The Sally Army and Me. New series. The presenter works alongside the Salvation Army's volunteers in a variety of roles, and reflects on how the charity has always been a part of his life. **6.35** BBC News. **6.50** Regional Programme. **7.00** Countryfile. Rural developments in Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire. Matt Baker investigates local crafts, including stained glass artists and weathervane makers. Ellie Harrison meets farmers who keep turkeys for their eggs. Sean Fletcher looks into the region's links with daffodils, and Adam Henson meets a three-year-old girl getting to grips with lambing. Plus, Charlotte Smith reports on how beavers are returning to mainland Britain, and examines arguments for preserving or culling them. Including Weather For The Week Ahead.

- 8.00** Antiques Roadshow. Fiona Bruce and the team head to the Royal Hall in Harrogate, with Alastair giving his highest valuation in 20 years on the show. Plus, the emotional story of a sapphire ring left to a young man by a recently departed friend, and the family history behind Betty's tearooms. **9.00** The Night Manager. Pine fears his cover will be blown when he is forced to return to the hotel where he first encountered Roper. Burr faces the consequences of her failed mission. Last in the series. **10.00** BBC News. **10.20** Regional Programme. **10.30** Would I Lie to You? Team captains David Mitchell and Lee Mack are joined by Rhod Gilbert, Sally Phillips, Des O'Connor and Tess Daly on the comedy panel show. Hosted by Rob Brydon. (R) **11.00** Film: Little Fockers. (2010) **12.30** Weather for the Week Ahead. **12.35** BBC News.

BBC2

- 6.55** This Farming Life. (R) **7.55** Gardeners' World. (R) **8.25** An Island Parish. (R) **8.55** Countryfile. (R) **9.55** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.25** The Best Dishes Ever. (R) **12.25** Finn: Kings of Kings. (1961) Drama, starring Jeffrey Hunter. **3.00** Fog It! (R) **3.30** Tim Rice - A Life in Song. (R) **5.00** The Secret History of My Family. (R) **6.00** Springwatch at Easter 2016. Chris Packham, Michaela Strachan and Martin Hughes-Games present the annual series. **7.00** Gareth Malone's Great Choir Reunion. Gareth continues his mission to reunite the remainder of all the choirs he has formed over the past 10 years. He tracks down some of the best singers from the South Oxhey Community Choir, the Military Wives and the nine workplace choirs he formed for the competition Sing While You Work. That's followed by frenzied preparations and rehearsals for the reunion concert. He may be able to bring together these singers from different groups across the country, but will he manage to get them singing together as a choir of choirs? (R) **8.00** Natural Born Winners. New series. Gethin, Llanuwyan Bayley, James Tordoff, Gemma Jones and Iwan Thomas travel around the world to compete in various countries' unusual and demanding sporting events, taking on local champions. The tour begins in the Welsh village of Llanwryd Wells, where they enter in local fell running event Man Versus Horse, where they must run 21 miles across difficult terrain, competing against mounted opponents. **9.00** Tribes, Predators & Me. Gordon Buchanan joins a group of Bushmen in Botswana's Kalahari Desert to learn their ancient secrets for surviving on foot among wild lions. **10.00** Thirteen. Ivy is arrested after her DNA is found in the cellar. Christina begs the police to be allowed to speak to her, and finally discovers the shocking truth behind her disappearance. **11.00** The People v OJ Simpson: American Crime Story. (R) **11.50** Film: Youth Without Youth. (2007) **1.50** Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **2.45** Holly City. (R) **3.35** Film: Hockney. (2014) **4.45** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

- 6.00** CITV: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.15** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.25** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Signed Stamps: Share a Story. (R) **6.50** Soothi (R) **7.05** Soothi (R) **7.15** Soothi (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! 7.35 Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: Nerds & Monsters. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Bear Grylls Survival School. **9.05** Scrambled!: The Tom & Jerry Show. (R) **9.25** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **10.20** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **12.25** ITV News: Weather. **12.35** Film: Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory. (1971) Musical fantasy, with Gene Wilder. **2.35** Big Star's Little Star. (R) **3.35** Off Their Rockers. (R) **4.10** Film: A View to a Kill. (1985) **6.35** Regional Programme; Weather. **6.45** ITV News: Weather. **7.00** The Chase Celebrity Special. New series. Bradley Walsh presents as Coronation Street's Hayley Tamaddon, football star Geoff Hurst, comedian Rob Beckett and presenter Gaby Roslin pit their wits against ruthless quiz geniuses in a game of winning a potential prize pot worth thousands of pounds for charity. They need to work as a team and play strategically to answer general knowledge questions against the clock and race down the game board to the exit without being caught. **8.00** Our Queen at 90. Members of the royal family pay tribute to Elizabeth II, and politicians, celebrities and ordinary people from all over the world talk about their experiences of meeting her. **10.00** ITV News: Weather. **10.15** The Read to Coronation Street. Jane Horrocks and Jessie Wallace star in a one-off drama telling the story of how the long-running soap was born. Tony Warren joins producer Harry Elton and director Derek Bennett as they struggle to create the programme, faced with opposition from ITV's formidable bosses Sidney and Cecil Bernstein, while Margaret Morris begins the hunt for the show's cast. (R) **11.55** Premiership Rugby Union. **12.45** Jackpot247. **3.00** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

- 6.00** How I Met Your Mother. (R) **6.25** How I Met Your Mother. (R) **6.45** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.10** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.45** Friends. (R) **8.30** Fraser. (R) **8.45** Fraser. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** Game Clarke's Amazing Spaces. (R) **1.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **2.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **2.25** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **2.50** Film: The Great Mouse Detective. (1986) Premiere. Animated adventure, with the voice of Vincent Price. **4.25** Film: Hop. (2011) Part-animated comedy, starring James Marsden. **6.15** Ice Age: The Great Egg-Scapade. Short animated comedy, featuring the characters from the movie series. Sid looks after some eggs waiting to hatch, but a villainous rabbit steals them all. **6.40** Channel 4 News. **7.00** The Secret Life of the Zoo. The Hi Way elephant family have been hit with a potentially deadly virus affecting animals in captivity and in the wild. With the youngest members of the family most at risk, the keepers and Chester Zoo's veterinary team do all they can to combat the mysterious illness. Meanwhile, Max the stallion zebra is introduced to the zoo's three mares, and the team will produce the much-needed offspring for this endangered species. There's also a look into the bizarre world of the naked mole rat. (R) **8.00** Great Canal Journeys. Timothy West and Prunella Scales follow the ancient routes of the Vikings and travel to Stockholm, where they navigate the city's canals. They later head out into the far-flung islands of the archipelago, before paying a visit to Drottningholm Palace Theatre, where they meet Wallander actor Krister Henriksson. **9.00** Indian Summers. Ralph tries to befriend a Maharajah to advance his standing, but Cynthia is thrown by an encounter with the ruler's mistress. The Dalai Family are drawn into Afrin's life. **10.00** Gogglebox. Capturing the households' instant reactions to what they are watching on TV from the comfort of their own sofas. (R) **11.00** Film: Inglourious Basterds. (2009) **1.45** Embarrassing Bodies Down Under. (R) **2.40** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.05** Selling Houses with Amanda Lamb. (R)

CHANNEL 5

- 6.00** Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **6.20** Bob the Builder. (R) **6.30** Ticket To, (R) **6.40** Zack and Quack. **6.55** Make Way for Muddy. (R) **7.05** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.20** Little Miss. (R) **7.35** Mr Potato! (R) **7.45** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.10** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.30** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **8.45** Toby's Travelling Circus. (R) **8.55** Film: Thomas & Friends: Sodor's Legend of the Lost Treasure. (2015) Animated adventure, featuring the voice of Joseph May. **10.05** The Fairly OddParents. (2014) Goal Rush: Football League Tonight. (R) **11.20** Now That's Funny! (R) **12.25** Pets Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **1.25** Dogs Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **2.25** Film: Watership Down. (1978) Animated drama, with the voice of John Hurt. **4.10** Greatest Animated Movies. **7.00** Now That's Funny! Cats battle it out with dogs and a man displays a talent for summoning animals. Plus, people failing to look where they are going and the latest Stars of the Week. **8.00** Penn & Teller: Fool Us in Vegas. Jonathan Ross introduces more magic acts determined to dazzle the duo, featuring card tricks set to instrumental music, a performance of prediction and a spirited illusion. Plus, Teller performs a trick with a ball and string. **8.55** Film: Weekends. **9.00** Film: Due Date. (2010) Premiere. Uptight architect Peter is desperate to make it home before his pregnant wife goes into labour, but an afternoon of driving and marshall gets him banned from flying. Unlike salvation is at hand in the shape of an oddball aspiring actor on his way to Hollywood, and the duo set off on a disastrous journey across America. Comedy, starring Robert Downey Jr and Zach Galifianakis. **11.20** Film: Daily 11.25 Film: Carry On Henry (1971) **12.10** Film: Carry On Girls (1973) **1.10** Film: 1.15 Film: Carry On Matron (1972) **3.00** Film: Daily 3.05 Film: Carry On Matron (1972) **3.50** Film: Rising Damp (1980) **6.55** Film: Daily 8.00 Film: Rising Damp (1980) **9.00** Film: Daily 9.00 Film: Forever (2001) **10.00** Film: Steptoe and Son (1972) **11.00** Film: Daily 11.05 Film: Steptoe and Son (1972) **12.00** Film: Daily 12.00 Film: Steptoe and Son Ride Again (1973) **1.20** Film: Daily 1.05 Film: Steptoe and Son Ride Again (1973) **2.05** Wycliffe **4** **11.40** MotoGP Highlights **12.45** Live Snooker: Players Championship. **5.15** Pawn Stars **5.45** Storage Wars **6.45** Live Snooker: Players Championship. **11.15** Film: Tin Cup (1996) **12.15** Film: Daily 12.20 Film: Tin Cup (1996) **1.15** Being Kevin Pietersen (2001) **3.00** Teleshopping **E4** **1.00** Film: 17 Again (2009) **3.00** The Goldbergs **4.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **10.00** Tattoo Fixers **12.00** The Aliens **1.10** Virtually Famous **1.55** The 100 **2.40** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **3.25** Holyoaks **Film4** **11.00** Catch That Kid (2004) **1.00** The Goldbergs **4.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **10.00** Tattoo Fixers **12.00** The Aliens **1.10** Virtually Famous **1.55** The 100 **2.40** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **3.25** Holyoaks **11.00** Film: The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader (2010) **3.10** Marmaduke (2010) **4.55** Sister Act (1992) **6.55** Rise of the Planet of the Apes (2011) **9.00** Fast & Furious 6 (2013) **11.35** Machete Kills (2013) **1.40** The Raid (2011) **3.50** Close

DIGITAL

- BBC Four** **7.00** The Passion **8.00** The Brontes at the BBC **9.00** How to Make a Number One Record **10.00** Film: Love Is All You Need (2012) **11.50** One-Hit Wonders at the BBC **12.50** Len Goodman's Dancing Dance: The British Ballroom Story **1.50** The Brontes at the BBC **2.50** The Story of British Pathé **3.50** Close **ITV2** **2.05** Take Me Out **1.20** Film: Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore (2010) **2.20** FYI Daily **2.25** Film: Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore (2010) **3.00** Film: Ella Enchanted (2004) **4.00** FYI Daily **4.05** Film: Ella Enchanted (2004) **4.45** Art & Deco Saturday Night Takeover **5.00** Film: The Mummy Returns (2001) **7.30** FYI Daily **7.35** Film: The Mummy Returns (2001) **9.00** Ibiza Weekender **10.00** Family Guy **10.30** Borderline **11.00** Family Guy **12.30** American Dad! **1.25** The Cleveland Show **2.15** Teleshopping **5.45** ITV2 Nightshift **ITV3** **11.20** FYI Daily **11.25** Film: Carry On Henry (1971) **12.10** Film: Carry On Girls (1973) **1.10** Film: 1.15 Film: Carry On Matron (1972) **3.00** Film: Daily 3.05 Film: Carry On Matron (1972) **3.50** Film: Rising Damp (1980) **7.55** Doc Martin **6.55** Film: Rising Damp (1980) **9.00** Film: Daily 8.00 Film: Rising Damp (1980) **9.00** Film: Daily 9.00 Film: Forever (2001) **10.00** Film: Steptoe and Son (1972) **11.00** Film: Daily 11.05 Film: Steptoe and Son (1972) **12.00** Film: Daily 12.00 Film: Steptoe and Son Ride Again (1973) **2.05** Wycliffe **ITV4** **11.40** MotoGP Highlights **12.45** Live Snooker: Players Championship. **5.15** Pawn Stars **5.45** Storage Wars **6.45** Live Snooker: Players Championship. **11.15** Film: Tin Cup (1996) **12.15** Film: Daily 12.20 Film: Tin Cup (1996) **1.15** Being Kevin Pietersen (2001) **3.00** Teleshopping **E4** **1.00** Film: 17 Again (2009) **3.00** The Goldbergs **4.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **10.00** Tattoo Fixers **12.00** The Aliens **1.10** Virtually Famous **1.55** The 100 **2.40** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **3.25** Holyoaks **Film4** **11.00** Catch That Kid (2004) **1.00** The Goldbergs **4.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **10.00** Tattoo Fixers **12.00** The Aliens **1.10** Virtually Famous **1.55** The 100 **2.40** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **3.25** Holyoaks **11.00** Film: The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader (2010) **3.10** Marmaduke (2010) **4.55** Sister Act (1992) **6.55** Rise of the Planet of the Apes (2011) **9.00** Fast & Furious 6 (2013) **11.35** Machete Kills (2013) **1.40** The Raid (2011) **3.50** Close

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MONDAY

Avengers Assemble, BBC1, 8.30pm

A mystical artefact is stolen from a top-secret military base by Thor's brother Loki, who plans to use it to bring about an alien invasion. Spymaster Nick Fury brings together a team of superheroes, including Iron Man, Thor, Captain America and the Hulk, to defend Earth from the impending attack. Action adventure uniting the Marvel comic-book characters, starring Robert Downey Jr, Chris Evans, Chris Hemsworth, Mark Ruffalo, Scarlett Johansson, Tom Hiddleston, Jeremy Renner and Samuel L Jackson. (2012)

TUESDAY

Triple Cross, BBC2, 1.35pm

Fact-based Second World War spy adventure about Eddie Chapman, a bank robber who became a British double agent in exchange for money and a full pardon. Following the German invasion of Jersey, Chapman offers to provide information to the Nazis, who are unaware his loyalties really lie with the British Secret Service. With Christopher Plummer. (1966)



Avengers Assemble, Monday, BBC1, 8.30pm

WEDNESDAY

Sneak Eyes, BBC1, 11.45pm

A corrupt cop seals off all exits in a casino after the fatal shooting of a US Defence Department official – but while frantically searching for the assassin among the 14,000-strong crowd, he is daunted by the sheer scale of the challenge. Thriller from director Brian De Palma, starring Nicolas Cage. (1998)

THURSDAY

Pretty Woman, BBC1, 10.45pm

A ruthless millionaire hires a prostitute while on a business trip. Realising she may be useful in helping him keep up a successful appearance, he pays her to accompany him for a week as he associates with the rich and powerful – but falls in love despite their many differences. Romantic comedy, starring Richard Gere and Julia Roberts. (1990)

FRIDAY

The Last Stand, Channel 5, 10pm

The sheriff of a small town on the Mexican border tries to stop a drug lord from fleeing the country. Action thriller, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger. (2013)

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A chilling new comedy series is on the horizon

Cast your mind back to New Year 2014, and the one-off comedy Two Doors Down, which was set at a disastrous Hogmanay party.

Well, it was disastrous for hosts Eric (Alex Norton) and Beth (Arabella Weir), who had to entertain their eccentric neighbours – viewers and critics had a whale of a time, which is why Two Doors Down is now back for a new six-part series.

Writers Gregor Sharp and Simon Carlyle are certainly excited about the show making the transition from radio series and festive special to fully fledged TV sitcom, especially as it's given them a chance to create some new neighbours to annoy Eric and Beth.

One of the new recruits is played by Rab C Nesbitt's Elaine C Smith, who Simon describes as a legend. Elaine is equally complimentary about the writers, saying: "Two Doors Down is a fresh voice in comedy and, whether I was in or

not, I'd watch it. It had a bit of Abigail's Party about it which I loved."

"My husband saw the pilot and raved about it. I said to my agent if anything comes up for Two Doors Down, count me in thinking it would be a bit part in one of the episodes, so when they came back with Christine I was thrilled. I had been waiting for a role like this for a very long time after Rab C Nesbitt."

Hypochondriac Christine has certainly given the actress plenty to get her teeth into. Elaine says: "Christine is a single parent who lives with her teenage daughter, Sophie [Sharon Rooney]. Christine's very like a man, which makes her liberating to play – she's had to be both parents to Sophie and has the freedom that males in comedy usually have – to be outrageous. She has some of the best lines I've ever had the joy to act."

And it seems there were plenty of good lines left over for her female co-stars, Arabella, Sharon and Doon Mackichan, who plays Cathy.

Elaine says: "Arabella had been in The Fast Show, I'd been in Naked Video and Doon in Smack the Pony so we've all come up through similar routes through sketch shows. Invariably, if you're a woman in a sketch show, you're on your own. Our role in the past was to feed the men in our shows the best lines."

"The day we all filmed a scene in a garden Bishopbriggs stands out to me as it was the four female leads and a female crew. I thought I was in a parallel universe! Women being allowed to be funny? It was just joyous."

The men will also be getting in on the action in this opening episode, as Eric accidentally leaves the freezer door open, so Beth decides to throw a party to use up the food before it goes to waste.

Everything seems to be going well, until Cathy decides it would be a nice idea for Colin (Jonathan Watson) to restock his next-door neighbour's freezer with a whole Scottish salmon.



Doon Mackichan stars in Two Doors Down, Friday, BBC2, 10pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY

Eddie Izzard: Marathon Man for Sport Relief BBC2, 9.40pm

In 2009, comedian Eddie Izzard completed 43 marathons in 51 days across the UK, eventually raising over £1.8million. Then, in 2012, he planned to complete a staggering 27 marathons in 27 days across South Africa to reflect the 27 years that Nelson Mandela spent in prison. Sadly, he had to pull out for health reasons. Undeterred, Izzard returned to complete the challenge this year for Sport Relief, running over 700 miles in temperatures of up to 30 degrees celsius. This documentary covers Eddie's journey, in which he also explored the history of South Africa and Mandela as well as visiting communities, organisations and families that have all been helped by the work of Comic Relief.

TUESDAY

Live International Football ITV, 7.30pm

England v Netherlands. Mark Pougatch presents the best of the action from the friendly match at Wembley Stadium, as Roy Hodgson's side continued their preparations for Euro 2016. Surprisingly, the Dutch will not be involved in this summer's tournament in France, having finished a

very disappointing fourth in their qualification group, below Czech Republic, Iceland and Turkey, which was not even enough to merit a play-off place.

Bake Off: Creme de la Creme BBC2, 8pm

We've had junior and celebrity versions of The Great British Bake Off, and now it's time for another spin-off – and this one is giving the professionals a chance to show what they can do. Presented by Michelin-starred chef Tom Kerridge, it sets out to find Britain's best team of pastry chefs, whether they come from top hotels or the armed forces. They'll all be making stunning patisserie and desserts in the hopes of impressing the judges Benoit Blin, chef pâtissier at Belmond Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons, Claire Clark MBE, renowned pastry chef and consultant, and Cherish Finden, executive pastry chef at The Langham, London. In the first edition, three teams have to make over 100 perfect miniature pastries, before reinventing the humble apple crumble as a five-star dessert.

WEDNESDAY

Horizon BBC2, 8pm

Examining Dark Energy, the mysterious force that is unexpectedly causing the universe's expansion to speed up. Its effects were discovered in 1998, but physicists still do not know what it is, and its very existence calls into question Albert Einstein's General Theory of Relativity: the cornerstone of modern physics. The hunt for the identity of Dark Energy is on, and although experiments conducted on earth and in space generate data that might provide a clue, physics is hoping another Einstein might emerge and write a new theory that explains the mystery.



Bake Off: Creme de la Creme, Tuesday, BBC2, 8pm

so if you're in the slightest bit squeamish, look away now. Pregnant women expect to get bigger in a certain area during their nine-month term, but 33-year-old Izzy is suffering from bizarre swellings all over her body and face – but has no idea why. However, a new GP may be able to unlock the mystery of her condition. Also hoping for a miracle cure is Beth who, for the past two years, has been struggling to leave her home due to extreme dizziness. Now she hopes a trip to see specialists in the US will help her. Finally, 11-year-old James suffers severe reactions whenever he steps outside – but can a cure be found for his allergy to sunlight?

FRIDAY

Billy Connolly's Tracks Across America ITV, 9pm

Pack up your belongings in a spotted handkerchief and grab your harmonica – we're ridin' the rails with Billy Connolly. For his latest travelogue, the comedian is travelling across the USA by train, from Chicago to New York, taking in 26 states, 6,000 miles and some parts of America that UK viewers rarely see on screen. Billy will even be providing his own soundtrack, courtesy of his banjo. In the first episode, he makes a stop at the Minnesota State Fair, where the attractions include corn beauty pageants and live animal births.

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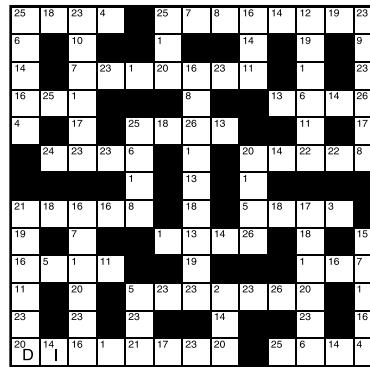
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PICK OF THE WEEK

BRAIN GYM No.370

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
H	X	U	D	Y	E	Q	W	R	Z	L	B	A
N	M	G	F	P	V	C	K	S	O	I	T	J
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

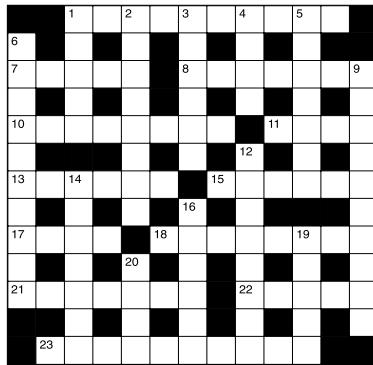
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- Service-chief? (4-6)
- A full round or a small portion (5)
- A tinier form of sloth (7)
- Left in error? (3,5)
- Gives someone their due (4)
- Tentative suggestion put out by some animals (6)
- Human or not, they exist (6)
- A French act free from restraint (4)
- Mark's follower getting close but losing interest (8)
- The star is disturbed by what anonymous letters may contain (7)
- Beaten finally, and finished off (5)
- Not praised, but need it drag out like this? (10)

Down

- A strike about a sailor may be hard to break (5)
- Reached round and ate it (8)
- A matter of some gravity (6)
- Being particular, it gets me to come up (4)
- Prepared to travel in a decent raincoat (7)
- Located the cause of the trouble and criticised (5,5)
- Men's assets as a basis for taxation (10)
- Belief about men in the building (8)
- Possibly sore after the finish, but give approval (7)
- His accounts may be all at sea! (6)
- Took part, perhaps (5)
- Vehicle that could be an imposition on one (4)



Quick Clues:

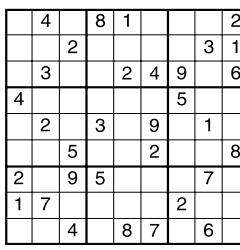
Across

- Premonition (10)
- Initiate (5)
- Student (7)
- Interloper (8)
- Drop (4)
- Kidnap (6)
- Diminish (6)
- Eject (4)
- Protector (8)
- Junior (7)
- Concerning (5)
- Compassion (10)

Down

- Combat (5)
- Disclaim (8)
- Requisitioned quarters (6)
- Dull (4)
- Bewilder (7)
- Binding (10)
- Revify (10)
- Revere (8)
- Argue (7)
- Carrier (6)
- Refuse (5)
- Old (4)

Sudoku

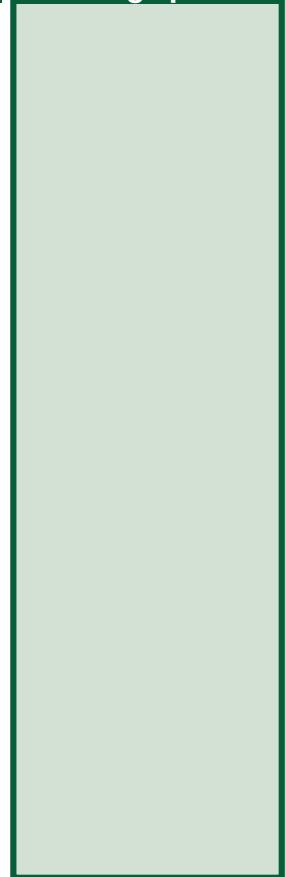


Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >
2 9 8 4 5 3 1 7 6
7 6 3 2 8 1 5 9 4
5 1 4 7 6 9 2 3 8
9 8 7 3 4 6 5 2
4 2 5 8 9 6 7 1
3 7 1 6 8 9 3 8 1
8 5 9 2 7 4 1 3
6 4 1 9 3 8 7 2 5
3 7 2 1 4 5 8 6 9

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Scip; 3 Stallion; 8 Mark; 9 Testator; 11 Night-dresses; 13 Ritual; 14 Instep; 17 Long drawn out; 20 On the set; 21 Able; 22 Parasite; 23 Leas. Down: 1 Seminary; 2 Upright; 4 Theory; 5 Latest news; 6 In the; 7 Norm; 10 Strangled; 12 Spotted; 15 Trouble; 16 Priest; 18 Circle; 19 Quicksand; 20 Rage; 3 Hornific; 8 Thus; 9 Disturb; 11 Immeasurable; 13 Entice; 14 Attach; 17 Fall into line; 20 Shambles; 21 Hard; 22 Entreaty; 23 Vend. Down: 1 Retained; 2 Gourmet; 4 Odious; 5 Retraction; 6 Fright; 7 Cite; 10 Calculable; 12 Shielded; 15 Agitate; 16 Infest; 18 Apart; 19 Isle.

Thinking space



Quiz

- At the end of which war was the Treaty of Sevres?
- Of which two countries, other than England, was Caen king?
- In which Scottish region is Edinburgh?
- For which Disney film did Elton John co-write an Oscar-winning soundtrack?
- What does HIV stand for?
- Whom did Josephine de Beauharnais marry in 1796?
- Which unit of time may be synodic, sidereal or calendar?
- Of which nationality was the composer Carl Nielsen?
- Which Cabinet Minister is an ex-Cunard waiter?
- Which of its four official languages is exclusive to Switzerland?

Last week's solutions:

- Quiz: 1 Rolls-Royce; 2 Marianas Trench; 3 Betel nut; 4 Esau; 5 Octopus; 6 IV; 7 North Sea; 8 Golden Fleece; 9 Dirk Bogarde; 10 Parrot.

Niner:

ABOLISHED

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

- 498651 gives a girl's name,
49258 gives a second girl's name,
437 gives a third girl's name.



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A must-see - Ashton Memorial with its imposing steps and views



The lap of luxury - a suite at Lancaster House



Lancaster House is an elegant hotel



Perfect area to relax with a cup of coffee

Leave reality behind and enjoy the chance to indulge yourself

WHILE I may have known it was going to happen I must confess my heart sank more than a little when the map took us off the M6 and in a different direction from the sign inviting us to The Lakes.

It was a little bit like boarding a plane and being told to turn right by a flight attendant when you have a hankering to be diverted left to the quails' eggs, head massage and free fizz of business class above the elbow in the face of standard.

But Lancaster, where we were headed, turned out to be anything but standard and Lancaster House the absolute lap of luxury.

The hotel is part of the English Lakes Resorts and Venues chain located in the north west, which is well-regarded by the industry

By Sarah Cowen-Strong

and visitors alike. You may not have a lake on the doorstep or a mountain peak visible from the ensuite but you can certainly enjoy a flavour of the area from this 99-room delight. As well as friendly northern hospitality, there's a host of local delicacies to try created by head chef Damien Ng who has been at the helm for five years and has devised a menu that celebrates the best of nearby produce – and the freshest of ingredients – all sourced from within 25 miles of the hotel. We were spoilt for choice.

How could we resist the Port of Lancaster Smoke House Platter, with its offerings of smoked trout, lemon and parsley mackerel, smoked salmon, and pork and black pudding sausage with horseradish mayonnaise?

How could we say no to the Lancashire Hot Pot with its rich yet never-greasy

confects of meat and vegetables? This modern and elegant hotel was bustling with visitors of all ages when we were there. Hikers and walkers relaxed cheek by jowl with holidaymakers lapping up the plush sofas and the magnificence of the Minstrel's Gallery.

Award

The hotel, which has won an award for its installation of 300 solar panels, has the tempting Sandpiper Leisure Club. As well as gym equipment and a beauty salon it has a swimming pool and an outside whirlpool bath. Step back inside the main body of the hotel and team this experience with a couple of chilled glasses of Prosecco from the bar and you can't help but smile.

Those who were using the hotel as a touring base had done their homework. It's near enough to the sights but far enough away

to retain a sense of serenity. In some Lakeside towns the pavements are so full. Not so in Lancaster. It doesn't attract swarms of day-trippers but has history and colour in abundance.

Being a university city it has plenty of pubs, bars, clubs and coffee shops. You could take a tour of the town's Lancaster Brewery or put yourself into expert hands for a tour of Lancaster Castle, which until 2011 also operated as a prison.

Raise your eyes to the skies and you see the Grade I listed Ashton Memorial which is 150ft tall and is visible for miles around. The folly was commissioned by Lord James Ashton in memory of his late wife and, with its imposing steps and views, is a must-see.

Lancaster is a true gem. It has a charisma of its own yet is on the doorstep of a host of attractions and the Lakes are just up the motorway.

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- Visit to St Fagan's Natural History Museum
- Guided Tour of Cardiff

DATES

MONDAY 2 MAY

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£285.00

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- Coach Travel
- Ferry Crossings
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- Breakfasts
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- Visit to Antwerp
- Tour of Diamondland

DATE

THURSDAY 4 AUGUST

PRICE
£199.00

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PRICE INCLUDES:

- Coach Travel
- Ferry Crossings
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- Short Tour of Paris

DEPARTS

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Kitchen is at heart of this modern detached



THIS improved and extended modern four-bedroomed detached house in Breamore Crescent, Dudley, is on the popular Earls Keep housing estate.

With a double garage, additional garage/store room and landscaped gardens, it is for sale through Wakeman at £350,000 with no chain.

The heart of this home is the kitchen/family room with a super range of kitchen units and appliances. There is a lounge with a gas fire and bay window, L-shaped sitting room and dining area, bathroom and four bedrooms (master en-suite). Contact Wakeman on 01902 885894 or www.wakeman-online.com



Holiday Cottage in West Wales price £99,950



A delightful little 'chocolate box' cottage set in the village of Talybont. This lovingly presented home has been greatly improved in recent years with lots of new fittings, although it should be said that the makeovers have been entirely sympathetic and with a ton of original features still intact, this cottage's original soul and integrity have not been compromised.

- Attractive cottage suitable for holiday lets
- 6 miles Dyfi Estuary, Ynyslas Beach
- Located in a picturesque valley of West Wales
- 7 miles from Aberystwyth
- Lots of Original Features

Contact agent to book a viewing



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SEDGLEY, Larch Grove

ENLARGED & reconfigured, Freehold, gas centrally heated, primarily double glazed detached comprising; hallway, cloaks, 21'4" lounge, upgraded/refitted dining kitchen, CONSERVATORY, 21'sitting room with extensive 18" storage annexe beyond (further potential?), Four bedrooms (bedroom one with shower room en suite), bathroom. Block paved foregarden with 'large detached garage'; rear garden. EPC:C. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £270,000



LOWER GORNAL, Musk Lane

NO UPWARD CHAIN. An extremely well presented DETACHED property situated in the popular of Lower Gornal. This THREE BEDROOM family home benefits from; spacious entrance hall, attractive kitchen-diner, utility, Living room, dining room, guest W/C, stunning family bathroom, double glazing and gas central heating, garage, driveway which offers ample parking to front and rear garden. EPC:E SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £214,950



NETHERTON, Racemeadow Crescent

This OUTSTANDING DETACHED HOME comprising: Hall, Guest W.C, Lovely Lounge with Double Doors opening to a Pretty Garden, Separate Dining Room, Excellent Kitchen, Three Large Bedrooms (Master with En-Suite), Bathroom, Driveway and Garage. EPC:C

£189,950



WORDSLEY, Arundel Road

A BEAUTIFULLY REFURBISHED THREE BEDROOM SEMI-DETACHED FAMILY HOME upon highly sought after 'Ashwood Park / Forest Lawns', offering an attractively re-appointed and tastefully re-decorated layout, plus a driveway, GARAGE and an attractive garden. EPC E

New price

£169,950



UPPER GORNAL, Board School Gardens

ENVIABLY SITUATED IN QUIET "BACKWATER"! Tremendously improved, gas centrally heated (recent boiler), double glazed semi detached at head of cul-de-sac within walking distance of so many amenities comprising; hall, lounge, kitchen, shower room. Two double bedrooms (both with built in wardrobes). Double glazed conservatory, 'low maintenance' gardens, GARAGE with lengthy drive. EPC: C. SEDGLEY

New price

WAS £170,000, NOW £165,000



DUDLEY, East Street

This SUBSTANTIAL and EXTENDED, SEMI-DETACHED HOME is furnished with a LARGE WELL FITTED KITCHEN and FOUR GENEROUS BEDROOMS. Also comprising: TWO RECEPTION ROOMS, FAMILY BATHROOM, En Suite Shower Room, Driveway, GARAGE and a Pleasant Rear Garden. EPC: D

£164,950



LOWER GORNAL, Robert Street

A modernised, improved & enlarged, Freehold, gas centrally heated & uPVC double glazed semi detached in popular district comprising; hall, 23'2" through living room (formerly separate rooms), uPVC double glazed CONSERVATORY, kitchen. Three bedrooms, bathroom with a white suite and a useful ATTIC (with velux skylight). Parking, lengthy through store, LARGE GARDEN with various outbuildings. EPC: E. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £154,950



WOODSETTON, Hilary Crescent

NO UPWARD CHAIN. Extended semi-detached property is located in the extremely popular Woodsetton area on a generous corner plot. This good-sized family home offers; entrance hallway, living room, dining room, kitchen, ground-floor wet-room, THREE BEDROOMS, family bathroom, double glazing, central heating, enclosed rear garden, ample garden and drive to front. EPC: TBA SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £139,950



BRIERLEY HILL, The Breeze

PERFECT for FIRST TIME BUYERS & YOUNG FAMILIES, This MODERN STYLE, THREE BEDROOM HOME comprises: Hall, Guests W.C, Stylish Lounge, Splendid Modern Kitchen, THREE BEDROOMS, White Suite Bathroom, Pretty Rear Gardens, Allocated Parking. EPC: C

£139,950

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Also at Stourbridge and Halesowen

New



SELDLEY, Wilton Close (Off Setton Drive)

UNIQUE WITH SELF CONTAINED "GRANNY-ANNEX"! Highly individual, gas centrally heated, double glazed detached family residence upon corner plot with panoramic distant views. Principal residence comprises; entrance vestibule, 31 ft reception hall, three stores, cloaks, 17 ft lounge, dining room, well equipped kitchen, three bedrooms (one with bathroom en suite), shower room, garage. Granny Annex provides; entrance vestibule, living/dining room, hallway, kitchen, bedroom with shower room en suite, Delightful garden. EPC: T.B.A. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £350,000



COSELEY, Seagull Bay Drive

Magnificent, tremendously enhanced, gas centrally heated, & double glazed detached residence in exemplary order throughout upon wider than average plot, comprising; entrance vestibule, hall, lounge, sitting room, dining room leading to CONSERVATORY, kitchen/utility room, cloakroom. Four generous bedrooms (principal en suite), bathroom. LARGE DOUBLE GARAGE/WORKSHOP (22'7" x 13'6"), block paved in/out driveway, garden. EPCC: SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £250,000



LOWER GORNAL, Ash Grove

NO UPWARD CHAIN. Beautifully presented DETACHED bungalow situated in a cul-de-sac location within the popular area of Lower Gornal. This TWO BEDROOM bungalow benefits from entrance hallway, good-sized living room, refitted kitchen-diner, utility, en-suite to master bedroom, family bathroom, central heating and double glazing, detached double garage, enclosed ornamental rear garden. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £210,000



QUARRY BANK, New Street

THIS THOUGHTFULLY EXTENDED, THREE/FOUR BEDROOM, SEMI-DETACHED HOME comprises; Hall, Modern Kitchen, Extended Lounge with Dining Area, Downstairs FOURTH BEDROOM, Guests Cloakroom, THREE FIRST FLOOR BEDROOMS, Bathroom, Driveway, Garden. EPC D

£139,950



TIPTON, Wood Street

Significantly modernised, Freehold, gas centrally heated & uPVC double glazed semi detached most conveniently situated within walking distance of so many amenities together with bus & RAIL transport routes comprising; hall, lounge, kitchen with a fine range of units, dining room, three bedrooms, bathroom. Block paved foregarden, delightful garden. EPC: E. SEDGLEY

Offers around £134,950



WORDLEY, Lawnswood Road

A BEAUTIFULLY REFURBISHED 'PERIOD' THREE BEDROOM MID TERRACE FAMILY HOUSE, retaining much of its original character, yet now offering a very spacious and attractively re-appointed layout, plus a pebbled forecourt and a large, level garden. EPC D

£134,950



PENSNETT, Tansey Green Road

Pleasantly located within this established address, enjoying fantastic open rear views, this GENEROUS SEMI DETACHED FAMILY HOUSE offers a spacious THREE BEDROOM layout, requiring some updating, plus a good sized driveway and a large level garden. EPC E

£134,950



DUDLEY, Richborough Drive

A superbly presented starter home set in the popular Richborough Drive development, this modern starter home briefly comprises; of living room, kitchen-diner, TWO DOUBLE BEDROOMS, attractive bathroom, and benefits from central heating, double glazing, enclosed rear garden and parking to front. EPC: C. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £129,950



GORNAL WOOD , Bank Road

WALKING DISTANCE OF VILLAGE! A gas centrally heated, & uPVC double glazed semi detached that has been completely redecorated and refreshed in recent months comprising; hall, cloaks, kitchen, living/dining room, THREE BEDROOMS (principal bedroom with a shower room en suite), bathroom. Parking, garden. EPC Rating: C. SEDGLEY

Offers in the Region of £130,000



LOWER GORNAL, Wealdstone Drive

A delightfully presented property situated in the popular area of Lower Gornal, benefiting from; uPVC double glazing, part gas central heating, entrance hall way, guest W/C, living room, kitchen-diner, THREE BEDROOMS, family bathroom, enclosed rear garden, garden to front. Ideal first time buyer property. EPC: D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £114,950



BRIERLEY HILL, Wells Road

THIS BEAUTIFULLY PRESENTED & THOUGHTFULLY EXTENDED, SEMI-DETACHED HOME comprises; Hall, Attractive Lounge, Lovely Living Room, Conservatory, Extended Kitchen, TWO BREAKFAST KITCHEN, Guests Cloakroom, THREE FIRST FLOOR BEDROOMS, Well Appointed Bathroom, Driveway & Substantial Rear Garden. EPC: C

£114,950



PENSNETT, Tiled House Lane

This DECEPTIVELY SPACIOUS & LARGE, THREE BEDROOM, SEMI-DETACHED HOME comprises; Hall, Lovely Lounge, MODERN BREAKFAST KITCHEN, Guests Cloakroom, THREE FIRST FLOOR BEDROOMS, Well Appointed Bathroom, Driveway & Substantial Rear Garden. EPC: D

£105,000



DUDLEY, Occupation Street

Well maintained end of terraced property which offers potential and is an ideal starter home. It is situated in the sought after area of Dudley and benefits from upvc double glazing, gas central heating, TWO DOUBLE BEDROOMS, through-lounge, kitchen, fitted shower room, enclosed rear garden, driveway to front and detached garage. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC: D. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £99,950



QUARRY BANK, Grosvenor Way

THIS SPACIOUS, MODERN STYLE END OF TERRACE HOME comprises; Spacious Lounge, Dining Area, Kitchen, TWO LARGE BEDROOMS, Bathroom, Lawned Front Garden, Fantastic Rear Garden which also provides Off Road Parking. NO UPWARD CHAIN! EPC: C

£92,950



DUDLEY, Heath Green, Old Park Farm

This modern intermediate townhouse property is situated in the popular Green estate. An ideal FIRST TIME BUYER opportunity, it benefits from entrance hallway, modern fitted kitchen, living room, TWO BEDROOMS, fitted bathroom, centrally heated and double glazed, enclosed rear garden, drive to front. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC Rating: C. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £89,950



COSELEY, Woodcross Lane

Concentrically maintained, Freehold, gas centrally heated, double glazed, loft & cavity insulated semi detached upon corner plot with distant views & briefly comprising; porch, hall, sitting room, living room, kitchen, pantry, lobby, Three bedrooms, bathroom, separate w.c.. Delightful gardens. MINING SEARCH AVAILABLE. EPC: T.B.A. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £80,000



SELDLEY, Daffodil Close, High Arcal

Significantly improved, gas centrally heated (recent combi boiler) & UPVC DOUBLE GLAZED semi detached overlooking fields to the rear. Rare opportunity to purchase under Housing Association shared ownership initiative whereby 50% SHARE is available, comprising; hallway, store, L shape living room, kitchen. Two double bedrooms, bathroom, garden, block paved front drive. 50% SHARE is available at offers around £70,000. EPC: C. SEDGLEY

O/A £70,000 for 50% Share



WORDLEY, Kinver Street

Conveniently located within this established address, this ATTRACTIVELY IMPROVED FIRST FLOOR ONE BEDROOM FLAT offers a generous, contemporary style layout which is beautifully appointed throughout, with OFF-ROAD PARKING to the rear. EPC: E

£64,950



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Two-bed detached has been refurbished

THIS two-bedroomed detached house in Neptune Street, Tipton, has been recently refurbished.

It is for sale through Goodchild's at £140,000.

It has a lounge with a feature open fireplace, a dining room with a feature fireplace, a kitchen with fitted units, a dressing room, master bedroom, second bedroom and a bathroom with a white suite and good-sized rear garden which has been hard landscaped for ease of maintenance. This includes a paved patio.

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•SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC RATING C



14 WESTCROFT ROAD, SEDGLEY O/A £225,000



•Extended and improved link detached house
•Gas centrally heated & double glazed three bedroom accommodation
•Attractively laid out gardens with the rear garden being South facing.
•Situated on the popular Northway housing estate

•SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC RATING D



3 HARVINGTON ROAD, COSELEY O/A £159,950



•Detached house with three bedrooms
•Two reception rooms, extended dining room, utility
•Well maintained and attractively presented accommodation
•Occupying a pleasant and convenient location
•SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC RATING E



73 LONGMEADOW DRIVE, SEDGLEY

O/A £279,950

•Well proportioned three bedroom family home
•Enviable position on the popular Northway housing estate
•Extended breakfast kitchen, lounge, sitting room with dining area
•Wide garden plot with wooded area and open fields to the rear
•SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC RATING TBC



12 CHEVENING CLOSE, SEDGLEY

O/A £189,950

•Modern detached bungalow
•Two bedrooms, shower room
•Spacious living/dining room with french window opening onto landscaped rear garden
•Enviable position at head of cul de sac
•SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC RATING D



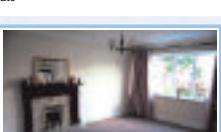
75 NORTHWAY

O/A £179,950

•Well presented link detached house
•Three bedrooms, through lounge & dining room
•Well proportioned accommodation with gas central heating
•Situated on the popular Northway housing estate
•SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC RATING E



9 SCHOOL STREET, WOLVERHAMPTON £575 PCM



9 SCHOOL STREET

£575 PCM

•Semi-detached villa residence
•Two bedrooms
•Two reception rooms
•Parking space, communal grounds
•Ground floor bathroom
•SEDGLEY OFFICE-EPC RATING E

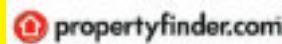
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DUDLEY
Dibdale Street

NEW

A end terraced, modern two bed house with off road parking and side access to the rear garden situated just off a main road. Having double glazing and central heating, the property has an entrance hall leading to the lounge/dining & modern fitted kitchen/diner. Main bedroom at the front, the second bedroom and the house bathroom/WC, upstairs there are three good sized bedrooms two doubles and a further single and house bathroom/WC with shower over the bath. Outside there is a ample of off road parking leading to a double garage, a side entrance. EPC: F
£127,950

OAKHAM, DUDLEY
Compton Drive

NEW

A spacious detached family residence in a sought after location of Oakham Road, in a cul-de-sac location, enjoying central heating & double glazing - the property comprises a porch, lounge with dining area, a further reception room, modern fitted kitchen, downstairs WC, upstairs there are three good sized bedrooms two doubles and a further single and house bathroom/WC with shower over the bath. Outside there is a ample of off road parking leading to a double garage, a side entrance. EPC: F
£219,950

NETHERTON
Round Street

NEW

A partly renovated two bed mid terraced house. With majority double glazing, new central heating with combi boiler, recently rewired, two reception rooms, utility, fitted kitchen and shower/WC on the ground floor, there are two large double bedrooms upstairs and a smaller, Yard to rear. In need of further work, a great project! EPC: F
£72,500

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A very well presented two bed semi-detached house in Netherton - walking distance of the town centre. Having double glazing and central heating, two reception rooms with separate fitted kitchen on the ground floor, on the first floor there are two double bedrooms, the second with a cupboard above the stairs and off access and a large bathroom/WC with shower over the bath. Garden and patio to the rear, with off road parking not allocated at the front or rear, with no upward chain, viewing recommended. EPC: TBC
£86,950

TIPTON
Gordon Drive

NEW

A two bedroom semi-detached property in a cul de sac location, with double glazing and central heating. Having an entrance hall leading to a good sized lounge with stairs off to the first floor and a door to the kitchen/diner. Through the kitchen to the rear there is access to the rear garden and patio. Upstairs there is a landing with doors to the front and rear bedrooms and a bathroom/WC with shower over the bath. No upward chain, viewing recommended. EPC: TBC
£104,995

DUDLEY
Wrens Nest Road

NEW

A modern, mid terrace three bed townhouse (three stories) with off road gated parking to the rear. Having double glazing and central heating, the ground floor has a fitted kitchen, WC and lounge to the rear with access to the rear garden, the first floor has a double bedroom to the rear and a single to the front, along with a house bathroom/WC, and the second floor has the master bedroom with dressing area leading to an en-suite shower/WC. There is a small garden to the rear. Unfurnished, no pets, no smokers. Available now for long term. EPC: C
£129,995

TIPTON, NAY COURT
Bradley Street

NEW

A pleasant, one bedroom first floor apartment in a very convenient location, just off the Birmingham New road. Off road parking and communal gardens, secure entry. Having UPC double glazing and electric heating, the apartment has a lovely lounge to the front with feature window, a large (double) bedroom with walk in wardrobe off, a fitted kitchen and a bathroom/WC with shower over the bath. No upward chain, highly recommended for viewing. EPC: D
£59,950

DUDLEY
Northgate Close

NEW

A splendid modern double fronted, spacious four bed detached family home on this popular estate - with double glazing and central heating. With spacious living accommodation over two floors, and a good sized patio and garden to the rear, outside there is a driveway with carport leading to a garage. EPC: TBC, viewing highly recommended.
£249,995

DUDLEY
Mossvale Close

NEW

A stylish & modern 'coach house' style first floor apartment with large hallway with wide staircase to the first floor, spacious lounge/dining room, fitted kitchen, two good sized bedrooms (one double and one single), fitted kitchen with integral oven and electric hob above; fridge and freezer, luxury bathroom/WC with shower over the bath, storage/fan heating throughout. Carport with storage cupboard on ground floor. Alarm System.
£109,995

SEDGLEY
Gospel End Street

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£550,000

DUDLEY
New Rowley Road

TO LET

One bedroom first floor flat (with separate entrance) - new double glazing, having central heating. Good sized lounge, separate kitchen and double bedroom, bathroom/WC off the bedroom. No pets, DSS considered with guarantor. EPC rating D
£385 PCM & Fees

Dudley
W'hampton Street

NEW

One bedroom first floor flat. Open plan lounge/ fitted kitchen. Bathroom with shower. Unfurnished. DSS considered with guarantor and good references. Available to view now. EPC E
£385 PCM & Fees

DUDLEY
Kent Street

TO LET

A first floor, self contained flat with double glazing and electric heating. Good sized-lounge/diner, double bedroom, fitted kitchen and bathroom/WC with a shower over the bath. No pets. Unfurnished. Off road parking to rear. Virgin media services available at this property. EPC F
£395 PCM & Fees

DUDLEY
Dixons Green Road

NEW PRICE

A large one bedroom ground floor flat with fitted kitchen to include integrated oven/ hob. Has a walk in shower with double bedroom. Has parking area available to the rear and is located close to Dudley town centre. The property is available for long term let. EPC: E
£425 PCM & Fees

DUDLEY
Windmill End

TO LET

Recently decorated two bedroom 1st floor flat. Open plan lounge & kitchen includes fitted oven & hob. Bathroom with mixer shower. Two reception rooms. Garden/ courtyard to rear. No DSS or pets. EPC C
£450 PCM & Fees

TIPTON
Harrowby Drive

TO LET

Recently redecorated one bed 1st floor studio flat in cul-de-sac location, lounge/bedroom, kitchen, WC/Shower. DSS considered with guarantor if over 35. Available now. Unfurnished. EPC E
£345 PCM & Fees

DUDLEY
Southgate Way

TO LET

A one bed first floor flat (with separate entrance) - new double glazing, having central heating. Good sized lounge, separate kitchen and double bedroom, bathroom/WC off the bedroom. No pets, DSS considered with guarantor. EPC rating D
£385 PCM & Fees

BILSTON
St Johns Road

NEW

Modern 2 bedroom ground floor apartment. Fully modern integrated kitchen, Master bedroom with ensuite/shower room. Secure communal entrance, Secure communal entrance, shower/WC. Central heating, available now. Viewings available now. DSS considered with guarantor. EPC: D
£495 PCM & Fees

DUDLEY
W'hampton St

NEW

A two bedroom 1st floor apartment in Dudley Town Centre with secure off road parking, briefly comprising large lounge, fitted kitchen, shower/WC. Central heating, available now. Viewings available now. DSS considered with guarantor. EPC: E
£495 PCM & Fees

Dudley
Himley Road

NEW INSTRUCTION

A one bedroom mid terrace house. Fully refurbished. Open plan lounge and fitted kitchen with built in appliances. Economical electric storage heating. Lovely views to the rear. Garage and off road parking. No DSS, no pets. EPC: F
£495 PCM & Fees

DUDLEY
Norman Street

NEW INSTRUCTION

Fully furnished two bedroom terrace house. New fitted kitchen with cooker and further utility area with appliances. New bathroom with shower on the same lower ground floor. Two reception rooms. Garden/ courtyard to rear. No DSS or pets. EPC D
£500 PCM & Fees

DUDLEY
Highland Road

NEW INSTRUCTION

Very nicely presented modern two bedroom semi-detached house. Lounge, fitted kitchen which includes built in oven & hob. Bathroom & bedroom & bedrooms located on the first floor. Parking area. Unfurnished. No DSS. No pets. Available now to view. EPC C
£550 PCM & Fees

DUDLEY
Dingle Close

NEW

A three bedroom semi-detached house with garage and driveway. Two reception rooms both with feature fireplace. Fitted kitchen with built in oven. Three good sized bedrooms. No DSS. Available from mid April 2016. EPC D
£625 PCM & Fees

BILSTON
Mason Street

NEW

A four bedroom detached house. Large lounge, fitted kitchen and conservatory. Downstairs WC and house bathroom. Small, low maintenance garden to the rear. Gated car port to the side of property. Available to view now. EPC E
£625 PCM & Fees

Tipton
Waterloo Street East

NEW INSTRUCTION

A three bedroom link detached house. Fitted kitchen with dining area. Brand new shower room and separate WC. Central heating. Driveway and single garage. Unfurnished, available to view now. No DSS, no pets. EPC: C
£650 PCM & Fees

Stourbridge
Castle Grove

NEW

A three bedroom semi-detached property in a popular location. Having two reception rooms, central heating and double glazing. Modern fitted kitchen. House bathroom. Garage and off street parking. Gardens to front and rear. Available to view now. No DSS. EPC: C
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Internet of cars

There is much hype about how cars are becoming more connected to the internet and smartphones, but this is not the only future for the car.

Almost every car maker now talks about how connected their cars are, how easily they can pair with your smartphone and offer instant access to the internet and all of the functions on your phone. Handy as all this is, there is also a future where the car is not simply a glorified mobile phone carrier.

A future of connected cars has many upsides, as cars will be able to communicate their position to other vehicles and allow for some, or total, autonomous driving. This should help reduce collision rates and bring down serious injury and fatality numbers on our roads. There is also a future of instant traffic information, navigation and even the car checking itself in for a service having already told the garage what needs attention.

All of this is good progress, yet a connected car future is not all sweetness and light as there are consequences of allowing our vehicles to communicate with the world outside its windows.

For starters, there are already concerns about the security of vehicles that have an internet connection.

There have been a small number of instances where connected cars have been 'hacked' so the driver does not have control of the vehicle. The outcome of this scenario is a car could be maliciously controlled with the driver in it or unlocked, started and stolen without the need for a key.

It's estimated that 89,000 cars in London in 2013 were stolen using electronic hacking, so this is a problem already afflicting car owners.

Another downside of cars becoming more connected and being able to book themselves in for a service without you having to lift a phone or tap a keyboard, is cost. A car with more technology fitted is going to cost more than one without, so the price you pay up front to buy or lease a car will be greater.

More costs will come in replacing any component that is connected to the car's onboard monitoring, as every part will require a sensor. Add complexity to a component and it rises in price to manufacture and fit a replacement. In a worst-case scenario, cars could fail MoT tests or even be scrapped because a sensor has failed and it's too expensive to replace even if the car otherwise drives perfectly well.



Connected cars also open up a debate about privacy and civil liberty. If a car is connected to the internet, it can easily be monitored for position and speed. This could mean any driver parking illegally or breaking the speed limit by even the slimmest margin could be automatically fined.

Insurance companies might also impose stricter usage conditions that can then be monitored 24-hours a day, which could be good news for those seeking to lower their premiums. However, how much information will be shared with insurance companies, council parking attendants and the police?

Car companies and governments are working to establish these guidelines, but don't expect the car to become little more than a big mobile phone too soon.

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Astra Sports Tourer now in showrooms

The new Astra Sports Tourer is now on sale priced from £16,585 on-the-road, with first cars arriving in Vauxhall showrooms this March after its global debut at the 2015 Frankfurt Motor Show.

One of the UK's top-selling and best-loved cars, Astra is a household name for British car buyers with almost three million sold in the UK over the last 36 years, including 50,000 in the last 12 months. More than 25 per cent of British motorists have either owned or driven an Astra, so reaction to a new model will always be felt across the market.

The Astra Sports Tourer is based on an all-new lightweight vehicle architecture with a new design, powertrains and technology. It is built at Vauxhall's Ellesmere Port plant in Cheshire. It is the only plant to build this body style.

The Sports Tourer has proved a popular car in the UK market, with sales making it the third most popular estate car sold in 2015 with key rivals including the Ford Focus Estate and the Volkswagen Golf Estate. With a fleet/retail sales split of 80:20, it holds great appeal as a company car, taking drivers from their daily commute to weekend activities. The Sports Tourer will also appeal to private buyers who are looking for a practical family car.

Vauxhall's all-new Astra and Astra Sports Tourer have secured 2,000 jobs at the Ellesmere Port manufacturing plant in Cheshire after workers won a long-term contract and a £140 million investment from GM.

UK firms, including those in manufacturing, utilities, construction, transportation and storage, benefit from approaching £70 million gross value added that results directly from Vauxhall's investment in Ellesmere Port (source: Centre for Economics and Business Research).

And this great British success story doesn't end there. The Astra range was designed by a team led by Brits Mark Adams and Malcom Ward. In his role as Vauxhall/Opel's design director, Ward follows in the footsteps of both his father and grandfather who both worked at Vauxhall.

Also looking forward to a bright future is Vauxhall's other UK manufacturing plant, Britain's leading commercial vehicle plant, located in Luton, where the Vivaro van is produced. Workers in Luton won a similar long term contract to their colleagues at Ellesmere Port. Their agreement runs for 10 years after a £125 million investment that secured 1,500 jobs.

The latest generation Sports Tourer has almost the same dimensions as the outgoing model. While the driver can enjoy 26 millimetres of additional headroom, passengers in the rear have 28 millimetres more legroom. The new Astra Sports Tourer can take up to three child seats in the rear and can also carry up to 1,630 litres of luggage thanks to the efficient packaging.

Inside, gracefully sculpted shapes are combined with premium materials and functional clarity. Switches and controls are reduced to an absolute minimum, supporting the efficiency and ease of use that is at the core of the Astra. The centrepiece of the new Astra's interior is the award-winning IntelliLink system. The location of the system was carefully selected to ensure both an ideal view of the display as well as easy reach and use.

Lightweight

The Sports Tourer is based on an all-new lightweight architecture. Its body is more lithe and aerodynamic and is also driven by powerful, weight-optimised engines. The new Astra Sports Tourer is up to 190kg lighter than its predecessor. It is the most aerodynamically efficient estate car built by Vauxhall with a co-efficient drag-value of 0.272 making it as streamlined as the five-door variant.

The bodyshell and structure alone are around 85kg lighter. High-strength and ultra-high-strength lightweight steels, more compact subframes as well as modification to the front and rear suspension all contributed to this result. Further size and mass-optimisation measures include shorter front and rear overhangs, an exhaust system that is up to 25 per cent lighter and smaller wheels and tyres that weigh up to 11.5kg less. The brake system has less mass to decelerate, making a more compact design possible (weighing 10kg less) while delivering even better braking performance.

Another plus on the efficiency side is the latest-generation Vauxhall engines. They distinguish themselves with their compact and ultra-efficient design: for instance, the new 1.4 ECOTEC Direct Injection Turbo engine now weighs less. Its aluminum engine block alone is 10kg lighter than the cast-iron block of its predecessor.

Reduced weight also leads to noticeably higher agility while saving fuel and CO₂ emissions. The Sports Tourer with the 1.0-litre Turbo and Easytronic 3.0 combination is an economical and clean high-tech petrol engine. The engine portfolio has helped boost efficiency with outputs ranging from 110PS to 200PS and fuel consumption and combined CO₂ emissions of up to 83.1mpg and 89g/km respectively.

For the first time on a Vauxhall, the tailgate can be opened without a touch or a remote control. In order to improve loading space the Sports Tourer Elite model comes with 40/20/40 foldable rear seats enabling even more flexible loading space configurations. The FlexOrganiser product range with side rails, dividing nets and various fastening options is available as an option so that all loaded materials can be stored safely and tidily.



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Maserati's first SUV a new wind in segment

With the Levante a new wind is blowing through the SUV segment, guaranteeing the passion, the flair and the exclusivity that have distinguished all Maserati models for over a century. Made in Italy and designed in the Maserati studio at the FCA "Centro Stile" of Turin, its design defines a new style in the SUV world, combining coupé lines with impressive interior space.

The Maserati Levante marks a turning point in Maserati's history. The brand new model, which made its world premiere at the 2016 Geneva Motor Show, enables the Trident to access the largest luxury segment in the world. The Levante significantly contributes to the creation of the most complete product line-up in Maserati's history.

The name Levante was inspired by a warm, Mediterranean wind that can change from mild to gale force in an instant, mirroring the character of the first Maserati SUV. It's based on the evolution of the saloon platform, designed exclusively by Maserati. The chassis has been specifically developed to offer unique on-road drivability and competitive off-road capability, with day-to-day comfort and practicality. The premium Italian SUV was conceived around three main pillars: Design, Exclusivity and Performance. It represents the optimum blend of these three elements in the SUV world.

The Levante's design is distinctive and attractive, embracing the aesthetic elements of Italian style. The design brings a new concept to the SUV world, combining spaciousness and coupé lines while achieving the best aerodynamic efficiency in its segment with a Cx coefficient of just 0.31.

Its exclusivity stems from technical features like Air Suspension and the Q4 AWD system, which come as standard equipment, and the high level of customisation that includes two cutting-edge packages, Sport and Luxury. The result is a driving experience that is as unique as the Maserati brand and its customers.

Agility

The Maserati Levante delivers unparalleled agility in the luxury SUV class. The thoroughbred on-road handling typical of all Maserati cars and the solid off-road capabilities, as demanded in the SUV segment, describe the car's overall ethos. The Levante is here to excite any sports car driver counting on performance-oriented features, such as the extensive use of lightweight materials, ideal 50-50 per cent weight distribution and it's lowest in class centre of gravity.

The aluminium "double wishbone – five link" suspension layout is comprised of standard Air Springs and electronically controlled Skyhook shock absorbers. In conjunction with the intelligent Q4 All-Wheel-Drive system and the newly introduced Torque Vectoring system which deliver GT on-road behaviour and surprising – for a Maserati – off-road capabilities; the Levante is designed to deliver best in class comfort on rough roads and handling on snow and ice. The off-road equipment completes a product made to surprise avid travellers and adventure lovers as well.

Engine-wise, the Levante is equipped with the latest evolution of the Maserati 3-litre V6 engines. The two versions of the twin-turbo petrol engine and the economical turbodiesel are globally acclaimed for their unique Maserati signature sound and for their exceptional performance.

The petrol Maserati V6 engine with latest GDI and twin-turbo is available in two versions: the top of the range 430 hp and the exciting 350 hp. The most powerful Levante makes it to 100 km/h in 5.2 seconds and has a top speed of 264 km/h, while the figures for the 350 hp version are 6.0 seconds and 251 km/h respectively.

The Levante is also available with a common-rail, direct injection turbodiesel V6 with reduced dwell time injectors. The 3-litre engine is capable of 275 hp and delivers 0-100 km/h in 6.9 seconds and a 230 km/h maximum speed while keeping the fuel economy as low as 7.2 litres/100 km under the New European Driving Cycle (NEDC).

Both petrol and diesel versions of the Maserati Levante use the eight-speed automatic ZF gearbox that provides seamless comfort and fast gear shifting, depending on the selected drive mode. The Levante driver can choose between four drive modes, "Normal", I.C.E., "Sport" and "Off-road". Each one constitutes distinct characteristics intelligently altering engine, transmission, suspension and electronics features.

Maserati's more than 100-year tradition of craftsmanship and cutting-edge technology guarantees outstanding quality right down to the tiniest of details. The five-metre long Levante is the longest car in its segment and its three-metre wheelbase is 6-10 cm longer than that of its major competitors.

As a result, the car is one of the roomiest in its class and also boasts the sportiest and most elegant design in the luxury SUV segment.



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Prices and spec for Volvo S90 and V90

By James Parker

The new Volvo S90 and V90 are now available to order in the UK, with on-the-road prices starting at £32,555 for the S90 saloon and £34,555 for the V90 estate.

The S90 and V90 are the latest models to be built on Volvo's all-new Scalable Product Architecture (SPA) platform and benefit from Volvo's ground-breaking Drive-E powertrains. Like the XC90 before them, they feature the new face of Volvo, including the T-shaped LED headlights that make them instantly recognisable.

Both models will initially be available with a choice of two 2.0-litre, four-cylinder diesel engines – the tax-efficient D4 and the powerful and refined D5 PowerPulse – and in two trim levels, Momentum and Inscription.

The front-wheel-drive 190 hp D4 comes with an eight-speed automatic gearbox, and offers combined fuel consumption of 64.2 mpg and CO₂ emissions of just 116 g/km in the S90. In the V90, these figures are 62.8 mpg and 119 g/km.

Responsiveness

The 235 hp D5 utilises an innovative technology called PowerPulse to boost responsiveness. This uses compressed air, which is stored in a tank in the engine bay and refilled automatically, to spool up the turbo at low revs. This helps to overcome turbo lag, which is the short delay in the power delivery you experience in traditional turbocharged engines.

To harness the engine's power, the D5 PowerPulse comes with all-wheel drive. An eight-speed automatic gearbox is also standard.

Every version of the S90 and V90 is luxuriously equipped. As standard, even entry-level Momentum cars come with leather upholstery, LED headlights with active high beam, two-zone climate control with 'CleanZone' air-filtration system, keyless engine starting and heated front seats.

Volvo's Sensus infotainment system is also standard. This brings a 9" touch screen, satellite navigation (including lifetime annual map updates), a sophisticated voice-control system, and access to the internet and a range of cloud-based apps such as Tuneln, Stitcher and Yelp.

The S90 gets a powered bootlid, too, while the V90 benefits from a powered tailgate.

Pilot Assist, Volvo's innovative semi-autonomous drive feature, is standard on every S90 and V90. It automatically keeps you at a set speed or distance from the vehicle in front, braking and accelerating with the flow of traffic, and gives gentle steering inputs to keep the car within lane markings at motorway speeds up to 80 mph. Unlike previous versions of the system, it no longer needs to follow another car. Pilot Assist is another step towards fully autonomous driving.

Detection

The latest version of City Safety is also fitted to every S90 and V90. This includes automatic emergency braking with pedestrian and cyclist detection, and the world-first application of large-animal detection.

This feature helps to avoid or limit the severity of collisions with large animals such as deer or horses both at night and during the day.

Moving up to Inscription adds Nappa soft leather upholstery, powered front seats, a 12.3" active TFT driver's information display (Momentum cars get an 8" version), 18" diamond-cut/silver alloy wheels, keyless entry and hands-free boot/tailgate opening and closing.

Additional premium touches include walnut interior inlays, rear footwell and side step illumination, and chrome exterior details.

The optional Xenium package is available across the range and adds a powered tilt and slide glass sunroof (panoramic in the V90), a parking camera system with 360° surround view, and Park Assist Pilot, which includes automatic parallel and 90° parking.

Apple CarPlay is another option and allows you to access certain functions of your Apple device and CarPlay-optimised apps directly via the car's touch screen, voice control system or the buttons on the steering wheel. Also available is the exceptional Bowers and Wilkins premium sound system, which offers no less than 18 speakers and an output of 1,400W.

Both models are available to order now, with the first S90 customer deliveries expected in September and the first V90s in October.



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Hot flagship Cupra gets power boost and a diet!

By Matt Kimberley



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In the history of mid-life updates, this is possibly the smallest you'll ever have seen. No cosmetic revisions here – not even new alloy wheel designs. The only mechanical difference is a new exhaust system with lower back pressure and a 5.8kg weight saving.

Performance-wise, you'll have noticed the name is now Cupra 290, and true to form it has 10bhp more than the old one. A tweak in the engine management software delivers the nominal extra go, which comes hand-in-hand with a wider gear torque band. The full 258lb/ft is now put down between 1,700rpm and 5,800rpm; 50 and 500rpm improvements at either end.

There's also Full Link phone-pairing software, so whatever your phone, it should hook up to the system with a degree of internet connectivity.

Barnstormer

Nothing changes with the appearance because Seat has hit on a winning formula. The Leon is its best-selling car, and it's the first real international sales barnstormer the company has had this decade. It ain't broke, so there's no point fixing it. The change is the boot badge upgrade, to Cupra 290.

From right now you can get the 290 in three-door (and, most lovely) SC, do-it-all five-door hatch and more practical ST estate shapes.

The ST has a couple of hundred litres more boot space than the 380-litre tub shared by the other two.

There's adequate rear legroom for passengers but it's not the airiest place for them to be. If there was a black mark it would be on the white seat trim, because it's the sort of thing that will get dirty all too easily.

Seat hasn't taken the chance to enliven the cabin, so it stays one of the least imaginative in the hot hatch clique. The seats might be well-shaped and supportive, but a few Cupra logos and a flat-bottomed steering wheel aren't really enough any more.

But ... hit the road and that's forgotten. The free-revving 2.0-litre engine masters everyday driving with barely 20 per cent of its ability. Use a bit more right foot and fast turbo response gives you astonishing overtaking punch. Keep the throttle pinned on your friendly local private airfield and it'll get to the 155mph limiter with ease. It's a monster.

It also sounds better. That new exhaust gives it more of a growl both inside and outside the car, and, unless I was dreaming, it's a bit louder, too. Both good things.

It changes direction like a rogue firework, even under power, if you're skilled enough to handle it that way. The VAQ slip-limiting system is as good now as it always was – i.e. superb. Be aware, though, it's much firmer on the track-biased Michelin Pilot Cup 2 tyres, which you can add as options. The standard Continentals are much more forgiving.

With the Cupra 265 confined to the bin (almost no one bought one), the entry point is now the full-fat and beautiful SC.

The highest-spec Focus ST is more than £2,000 cheaper (before haggling), but it's not as accomplished a motor. On the other hand, a Civic Type R is more expensive and you get less equipment to show for it. The Leon could be a bit better equipped, as evidenced by the now-huge options list, but everything you really want is on the car already.

In terms of value, it splits the pack, but it depends what each buyer is actually looking or hoping for.

The flagship Cupra still isn't that common a sight in the UK, but owners are the type who exchange a nod and a wave. It's like a secret shared between two strangers: it's a hell of a car, and those who've bought one know exactly why.

The Cupra 290, like the 280 before it, is part of modern hot hatch legend – if only within the scene itself.

This car summed up in a single word: Mighty. If this car was a: Power Ranger it would be the red one. It's an all-rounder, a leader and boy does it have some skills.

TESTED

Seat Leon Cupra 290, from £28,375

Engine: 2.0-litre turbocharged petrol producing 286bhp and 258lb/ft

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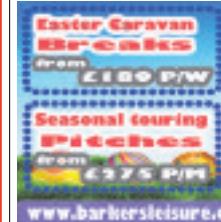
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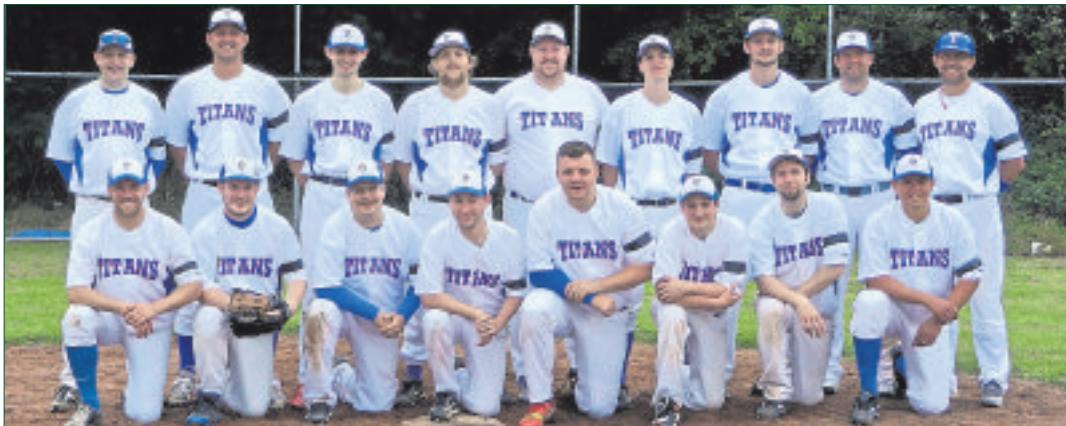
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Stourbridge Titans are looking to build on their success in the third tier of the British Baseball Federation



Alan Jones, catcher and number 2 in the order, gets in some practice



Titans player Alex Darby, second base

Big-hitting baseball Titans pitching in for a brighter future

SPORTING FEATURE

By Nick Elwell

"We had one of the old playing fields and we built everything ourselves. It was the whole Field of Dreams - if you build it they will come."

STOURBRIDGE Titans baseball club are looking to build on their success story by catching the next generation of stars.

The Titans have made impressive progress since realising their dream to form a club five years ago. They now compete in the British Baseball Federation AA Central Division.

Shaun Healy, Corey Millard and Samantha Smith were the founder members who got the ball rolling in 2011. And after a testing couple of seasons the Titans have excelled on the field, winning the league title in 2014 and finishing runners-up last year.

They now boast a senior squad of up to 25 players and are looking to the future as baseball grows in popularity this side of the Atlantic.

"The founders of the club were Shaun, Corey, Samantha," said secretary Stuart Walton, who traded bowling off-spin for Coseley Cricket Club for a shot at pitching with the Titans.

Diamond

"They all played at the start and Shaun and Corey still do now."

They used to play for Birmingham Bandits, but they were travelling a long way because they lived in Stourbridge. So they said 'right, we want to start a new club of our own'. And so they started the club at Thorns Community College which is where we are based.

"We had one of the old playing fields and we built everything ourselves, an 18ft high backstop, the diamond, everything. It was the whole Field of Dreams - if you build it they will come. Then it was a question of recruiting players. I think I was one of the first to join up."

"I used to play cricket and I had an interest in baseball. But I was never going to get any further at cricket and I got more of a buzz from playing a new sport."

"I was enjoying the fact that it was something new and that I was learning new things."

Walton is now keen for other people to enjoy that buzz, especially youngsters keen to try a new sport and chase a possible Olympic dream.

"One of the things we are really trying to do is develop a youth team," he said.

"We started Junior Titans towards the end of last year to try to get more kids involved in the game from around our area."

"We were focused on getting the field ready and building the senior team and our next focus is getting the youth team together. We need to keep the club alive."

"Baseball is going to be seriously considered for the 2020 Olympics. That won't be decided until this August, but it looks very likely. The Olympics are in Japan and it's Japan's national

sport. In four years time you could actually be an Olympian and playing for the GB team."

No prior knowledge of baseball is required to play the sport with Titans well-stocked with coaches and kit to help newcomers learn the ropes.

"We have one guy who is from America who played at high school when he was in America but everyone else started from scratch," Walton said. "One of the big things we need to do is to raise awareness. Most people don't even realise baseball is played in this country, never mind that there is a side in Stourbridge," he added.

Titans compete in the third tier of the British Baseball Federation set up with the new season starting in April.

Birmingham Bandits, Long Eaton Storm, Nottingham Rebels, Leicester Blue Sox and Milton Keynes Bucks are their league rivals with matches played on Sundays on a double-header basis.

Travelling

"We play double-headers over seven innings to cut down on the travelling," added Walton.

"If you get out, then another eight batters later you are in again. Your day is not ruined if you get out first ball."

"In cricket you can get out first ball and end up paying six quid for your tea to field for 50 overs. In baseball, if you get out it's not that big a deal because you get to bat again."

Anyones interested in joining the Titans, or going along for a taster session, should contact Stuart Walton on 07854 353335.

Training is on Sunday mornings during the winter at Thorns Community Centre, from 11.30am-1.30pm, and on Tuesdays from 6.30pm at the same venue during the season.



Coach Jeff Nash during training



First base and pitcher Karl Ensor

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Sport

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Glassboys' hopes dealt major blow

Stourbridge 1 Ashton Utd 2

STOURBRIDGE suffered a severe setback to their play-off prospects home to promotion rivals Ashton despite early efforts by Glassboys strikers Karl Hawley and Justin Richards.

Chris Lait put Hawley clean through after eight minutes but the league's top marksman fired straight at Ashton keeper Paul Phillips. Then Richards missed in front of goal.

On the 26th minute defender Dan Scarr robbed Ashton's Matty Chadwick when clean through on goal.

The match turned on 28 minutes when James Dean got goal side of Glassboys defender Stuart Pierpoint and went through only to be brought down by Pierpoint, who was sent off. Chris Baguley converted the penalty.

Stourbridge were forced to regroup, Lait being sacrificed for substitute defender Joe Hull. Despite being down to 10 men, Stourbridge still had a chance to claw themselves level when full back Kristian Green played through Hawley but the striker's shot lacked enough power to trouble Phillips.

Matters worsened on 42 minutes when Dean beat the offside trap to slot home past advancing Glassboys' keeper Matthew Gould.

Stourbridge struggled to make any impact after the break as Ashton defended in depth at every opportunity. But Stourbridge threw themselves a lifeline on 78 minutes when Matt Dodd crossed to the far post for Junior Smikle to smash home, but it was only to be consolation.

Workington 1 Stourbridge 1

Glassboys were held to a third straight league draw after taking a first-half lead through Sean Geddes' free-kick at fourth-placed Workington on Saturday. Then Stourbridge were pegged back by Joe McGee's header.

County finals next as Hagley end the season unbeaten

Cookley (120-1) beat Envile A (78-3) by 42 runs

ENVILLE A arrived with only four players and the game would not have proceeded but for Cookley offering a player to field: as a 'match' it defied the description and was not fair to the opposition.

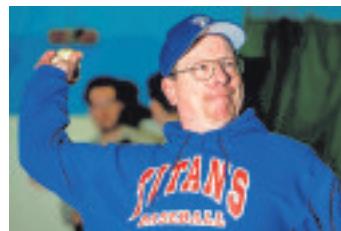
Cookley elected to bat and took advantage of Enville's man short in the field. Enville, with a massive target to chase and only having four batsmen made a decent fist of it with Alex Craven hitting some good shots. The other batsman tried to make a respectable score but fell well short.

Hagley (102-3) beat Swindon (74) by 28 runs

HAGLEY had a disastrous start losing Joe Lennon for two with the score on eight. John McDonnell took up the mantle to try and get a respectable score finishing on a 102-3.

Swindon had eyes on an upset but lost two wickets in the first over and never recovered though a fine knock by Wale (30) took them to 74 in the last over.

Hagley ended undefeated and progress to the County Finals on April 17.



Big-hitting baseball Titans pitch in for brighter future

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Paddock in charge for points victory

BLOXWICH'S Luke Paddock displayed his skills to earn a points victory in his hometown at the top of the bill on Saturday night.

The former Midlands light welterweight champion shut-out capable scrapper 'Fonz' Alexander Anderson in the top liner at Walsall Town Hall, writes Craig Birch.

Local rival Martin Gethin, the former English and British title holder, watched on from ringside having pulled out of appearing on the show through a chest injury.

All six of the under-card contests were four-rounders. Midlands light middleweight champion

Boxing

and two-time British title challenger Jason Welborn provided chief support.

Rowley Regis' Welborn was in action for the first time since courageously taking three-time world title challenger Matthew Macklin the distance last October.

The never-stopped Adam Jones proved a durable roadblock and made it competitive early on, taking a share of the first round. Welborn settled, testing Jones to the body. The tough Jones made

it through but Welborn will be happy to get the rounds in the bank. His hand was raised by a 40-37 score-line.

Heavier Luke Allon tried to bully Tom Stokes in their middleweight bout, but only succeeded in spurring him on. Allon bobbed and weaved, even showboated, but there was nothing for him to do about when he had to take a knee after a right hook to the body. He gathered himself and boxed on to the final bell, meaning Stokes had to settle for a 40-36 points shut out.

Welterweight Sid Bowater scored a first round knockout of Brummie Dwayne Sheldon.

DK ROMP TO SAFETY ZONE

DK 54 Kenilworth 7

DUDLEY Kingswinford went in the game against Kenilworth having lost their last six games and not safe from relegation – but all that changed as DK recorded the third win this season in which they had scored more than 50 points.

They scored eight tries, converting seven, for a tally of 54.

The DKs were beset by injury and players not available and the game started with Kenilworth exerting the early pressure, forcing a penalty that they missed. They were soon to rue that miss.

DK started to dominate with their phase play. With pressure mounting, a gap opened up and long-striding flanker Lewis Hannibal made the most of a stretched defence to gallop through for the opening try. Tompkins converted.

DK soon struck again as Nic Adams scored in the Wanderers' corner, with two more points from wide out by Tompkins.

It was soon 21-0 as Kenilworth were again caught on the counter and this time Shef Shillingford ran the try in.

The fourth try of the first half was perhaps the most satisfying with a penalty put into the corner by Tompkins. A training ground move ended with Shef Shillingford going in under the posts, and the extras slotted 28-0 at half time.

The second half saw a feast of running rugby started by an excellent solo try by Ryan Wicketts, who evaded several defenders. Shillingford scored a third try to take the score to 40-, followed by Tompkins' only missed conversion.

At this point the visitors scored their only try which was converted but it was too little too late.

Young Tom Walker deserves a mention after he came on for a limping Nic Adams, only to be yellow carded almost immediately for preventing release.

DKs finished the game with two further tries after a surging run from Mitch Grealy, which was a reward for some hard running in the centre, and the final try by Duncan Tompkins to take his personal points tally for the day to 19.

Netherton's karate kid for GB



Ben Young, aged 13, of Netherton, competing in Malta and Ireland

A DUDLEY teenager will be representing Great Britain at the WUKF World Karate Championships in Dublin this summer.

Ormiston Forge Academy student Ben Young, aged 13, from Netherton, is competing as part of the All-Styles Karate Alliance.

Ben has been taking part in karate at Dudley Shukokai Karate Club for eight years, training four times a week.

Malta

In that time, he has attended a number of competitions and tournaments and will be competing in Malta this month in the Open Karate Championships.

The WUKF Championships in Dublin, held in June, will be the sixth held by the Federation and include divisions for children, cadets, juniors, seniors and veterans.

Principal at Ormiston Forge Academy Andrew Burns said: "Congratulations to Ben, this is an outstanding achievement."

"He has shown incredible commitment to his sport and we wish him all the very best of luck in his upcoming competitions."

The World Union of Karate-do Organisations (WUKF) was originally founded in 1970 and is based in Belgium.

Ilkeston 1 Halesowen 3

HALESOWEN Town made it back-to-back away wins with a three-goal first-half blast. It took just eight minutes for the Yeltz to take the lead in this Eovo-Stik Northern Premier away game.

A long free-kick was misjudged by the defence and Kaiman Anderson lifted the ball over goalkeeper Jamie Hannis and headed it into the empty net. Anderson got the second on 27 minutes when Daniel Sweeney put a cross straight on his head three minutes later. Ashley Parsons-Smith's fierce effort squeezed under Hannis at the near post. Dexter Atkinson pulled one back on 74 minutes.

★★★

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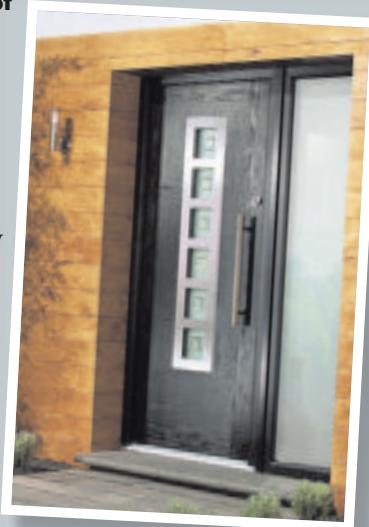
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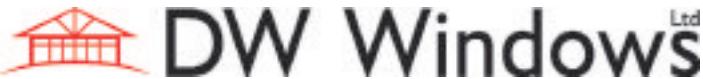
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